BIG MEN AND OLD MEN: MIGRANT-LED STATUS CHANGE IN BUTON, INDONESIA

By

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Declaration

I, Blair David Palmer, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, College of Arts and Sciences, the Australian National University, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This thesis has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institutions.

Signed,

Blair Palmer

for my parents

Abstract

This thesis examines changes in social status in the village of Boneoge, in Buton (Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia), through a period of rapid social change. Social status is a vital part of life in Buton, and has remained so over the past half-century as the emergence of the Indonesian state, the increasing penetration of capitalism, shifts in local forms of global religions, and new forms of mobility have radically changed people's lives throughout eastern Indonesia.

'Social status' here refers to the degree of respect or deference that one receives from one's fellows, distinct from 'rank', a hereditary system of categories of nobles and commoners. Status in Boneoge depends partly on rank, but also on other characteristics such as wealth, age, social connections, and religious reputation. The status system is not static but changes over time, as villagers place more or less value on particular characteristics. Changes in the status system reveal broader patterns of social change in the village, as people appropriate exogenous influences according to their current needs, lifestyles, and agendas.

Migration is essential to changes in the status system, so Boneoge migration patterns are described in detail; this simultaneously addresses the dearth of literature on Butonese migration. Boneoge migration patterns have changed radically over the past half century, but migrants have stayed closely tied to the Boneoge community even during long absences. This anchoring to the home village has enabled migrants to play a strong role in mediating social change there. Boneoge migrants have taken advantage of emerging economic opportunities in eastern Indonesian towns, and many have become wealthy traders. Agriculture has declined in Boneoge, and those who turned to sailing and trading earlier have achieved more wealth, status and power in the village than those who remained farming for longer. Kinship and patronage remain vital parts of social life, but patronage now centres on wealthy traders who provide migration opportunities to kin, and not on nobles, elders, or village leaders.

Religious change is also tightly linked to these shifts. Alongside the decline of farming and the end of the Wolio Sultanate in Buton, traditional structures of religious and political authority have been weakened. Modernist Islam has strengthened in Boneoge, partly due to the influence of wealthy migrant traders, and local agricultural rituals related to propitiation of territorial spirits have been discontinued, weakening villagers' connection to the land. This represents a simultaneous recalibration of spiritual and social hierarchies, and the status of elders, farmers, and farming-related *adat* (customary) knowledge has plunged.

Deagrarianisation, migration, and urbanisation have not severed the connection of Boneoge people to their village, but this connection has shifted from a geographic one, centred on the land of the home village, to a more demographic one, centred on groups of kin spread out across migration locations.

In contrast to the 'old men' who had control over the village's political, economic and religious life in the past, wealthy traders, especially the most successful among them (who are referred to as 'big men'), exemplify a new model of high status, referred to as *sukses*. This new model prioritises wealth rather than descent, patronage rather than formal leadership positions, and modernist Islam rather than traditional *adat* knowledge.

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Note on Language and Names

The Wolio language, or *bahasa* Wolio, is spoken in the district capital, Baubau, and by some people in the research village, Boneoge. Many cultural terms and expressions are in *bahasa* Wolio due to the cultural influence of the Wolio Sultanate. The Muna language, or *bahasa* Muna, is the native tongue of most Boneoge people (with the exception of many young migrants who grew up elsewhere). *Bahasa* Muna is also spoken by others from the island of Muna (where Boneoge is located) and from a few neighbouring islands.

The variant of *bahasa* Muna spoken in Boneoge is similar but not identical to the 'Gulamas' dialect of *bahasa* Muna (van den Berg 1996); there are some differences between the Gulamas dialect and the Boneoge version. Boneoge people thus tend to refer to the language they speak as '*bahasa* Boneoge' rather than *bahasa* Muna. *Bahasa* Muna has an 'implosive b', written 'bh' (in addition to 'b', the sound more familiar to English speakers), and a 'dental plosive d', written 'dh' (in addition to 'd', the sound more familiar to English speakers) (van den Berg 1996).

All foreign language terms used in this thesis will be in italics. Terms in Wolio will be indicated with a '(BW)' at first usage, for instance '*banua* (BW), meaning "house"', or 'house (BW: *banua*)', unless the language is explicitly identified in the text. Similarly, terms in Muna will be indicated with an (BM) at first usage. Upon subsequent usage, the BW or BM will not be repeated, but the term will be in italics. As the majority of foreign language terms used are in Indonesian, Indonesian terms will be indicated simply with italics.

Note also that the names of all Boneoge people in this thesis have been changed.

Thesis Word Count (excluding footnotes and references): 90,965

Glossary

Term	Language	Meaning
'umuleino	Muna	one who searches for money
ABK (anak buah kapal)	Indonesian	boat crew member, used more generally to mean 'subordinate worker'
adat	Indonesian	custom, local religion; see discussion in Chapter 7
agama	Indonesian	world religion (excludes local religious traditions)
alano fotu	Muna	ritual to mark a baby's first haircut
anak	Indonesian	child, also used for 'young person'
anak buah	Indonesian	underling
anak muda	Indonesian	younger generation
analalaki	Wolio	intermediate rank in the Wolio Sultanate, between *kaomu* and *walaka*
bagan	Indonesian	fishing platform
bahasa	Indonesian	language
balaba	Muna	traditional Butonese martial arts
batata	Muna	mantra, traditional prayer
batua	Wolio	slave rank, in the Wolio Sultanate
bawa lari	Indonesian	to elope; literally 'to take and run'
becak	Indonesian	pedicab
bhisa	Muna	healer, sorcerer, *adat* expert
bhisano kaampo	Muna	*dukun* of gardens
bhisano kafoago	Muna	healer
bhisano kanainai	Muna	traditional midwife
bid'ah	Arabic, Indonesian	improper innovation
Boetoeng	Indonesian	old spelling of 'Buton' (as used by people from South Sulawesi)
Boneoge	Wolio	the village where fieldwork took place; means 'big sand'
Boneoge proper	English	the main part of Boneoge village, consisting of the neighbourhoods of Tampanalia and One, and excluding Matoka and Kampung Baru
bongka ta'o	Muna	the 'opening of the year', a harvest festival
bos	Indonesian	boss
boti	Muna	perahu lambo
bubu	Muna	fish trap
bupati	Indonesian	District head
butun	Indonesian	a type of tree (Latin: *barringtonia asiatica*)
Butung	Indonesian	old spelling of 'Buton' (as used by people from South Sulawesi)
butuuni	Arabic	pregnant stomach
dhoa	Muna	a traditional Muna language prayer
dhoti	Muna	black magic
dituakan	Indonesian	considered to be old, i.e. respected
doa	Indonesian	to pray
dosa	Indonesian	sin
dukun	Indonesian	healer, sorcerer

Term	Language	Meaning
falia	Muna	taboo
fowanu lambu	Muna	a ceremony for the erection of a new house
gertak	Indonesian	a kind of direct confrontation through which one party seeks to dominate another
gubernor	Indonesian	Governor, head of a province of the state of Indonesia
Haji	Indonesian	title for a man who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca
hajj	Indonesian	the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca
Hajjah	Indonesian	title for a woman who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca
haroa	Wolio	ceremonial meal
Hukumu	Muna	one of two leadership councils in Boneoge in the past, focused on religious matters
ilmu	Indonesian	power/knowledge/magic
jala	Indonesian	dragnet
jaman	Indonesian	era
jasa	Indonesian	service
ka'uleia	Muna	place of searching for money
kaagono liwu	Muna	the 'healing' or 'cleansing' of the village, a protection rite
kabupaten	Indonesian	district
kadié	Wolio	semi-autonomous village within the Wolio Sultanate
kahitela	Muna	maize
kaki lima	Indonesian	small kiosk (from 'five legs')
kamokula	Muna	'old men'; has many meanings, including 'parents', 'elders', 'shaman', see discussion in Chapter 4
kamokulano liwu	Muna	village elder
kampana'a	Muna	offerings for spirits
kampung	Indonesian	village, neighbourhood
Kampung Baru	Indonesian	a neighbourhood in Boneoge, where many farmers live, literally means 'new village'
Kampung Lama	Indonesian	a farming settlement in the hills just outside of the current village of Boneoge, where many people from Kampung Baru used to live; literally means 'old village'
kangkilo	Muna	a traditional circumcision ceremony
kaombo	Muna	the ritual sequestering of women between onset of menstruation and marriage
kaomu	Wolio	high noble rank, in the Wolio Sultanate
kapolangku	Muna	another name for the Boneoge neighbourhood of Kampung Baru
kecamatan	Indonesian	Sub-district
kelurahan	Indonesian	a village headed by a civil servant
kepala keluarga	Indonesian	family head
keramat	Indonesian	sacred, spiritually potent
keraton	Wolio, Muna	a walled fort in Baubau, the site of the Wolio Sultanate (used in other parts of the country to refer to 'Sultan's palace')
ketua adat	Indonesian	*adat* leader, *adat* expert
Kolakino	Muna	leader of a *kadié* under the Wolio Sultanate
kolope	Muna	an edible root

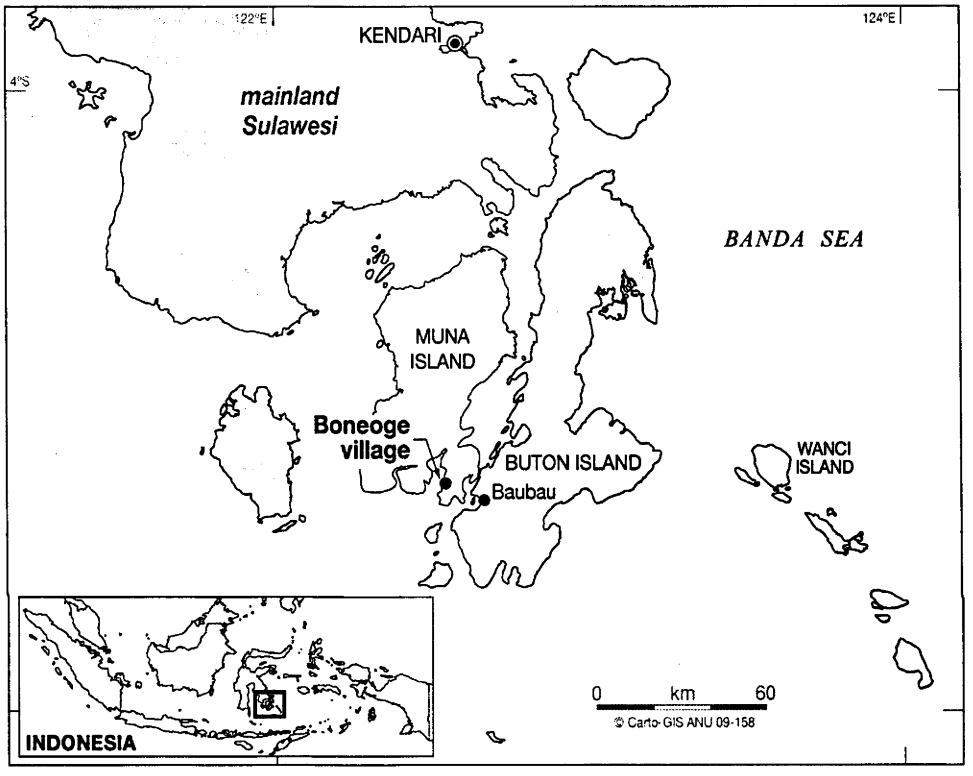
Term	Language	Meaning
La	Wolio, Muna	used in front of men's names in Buton
La Ode	Wolio	title for male nobles from the *kaomu* rank
Lakina	Wolio	leader of a *kadié* under the Wolio Sultanate
lambu tadha	Muna	traditional wooden stilt house
Lawonolita	Muna	another name for the settlement called Kampung Lama
limbo	Wolio	intermediate rank in the Wolio Sultanate, between *walaka* and *papara*
liwu	Muna	village (used in Boneoge to refer to the walled fort in the hills which was the former site of Boneoge)
LKMD (Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa)	Indonesian	Village Development Council
lo'oi	Muna	to summon
LPM (Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat)	Indonesian	Village Empowerment Council
lurah	Indonesian	Village head, civil servant appointed to head a *kelurahan*
maghrib	Indonesian	the period around dusk, the Muslim prayer at dusk
mahar	Indonesian	bride price
maia	Muna	shy, ashamed
malu	Indonesian	shy, ashamed
Matoka	Muna	a neighbourhood in Boneoge, newly built in 1999
Mawaruanu	Muna	a farming settlement in the hills above Boneoge, near Matoka
mawusao	Muna	cassava
mengaji	Indonesian	to chant the Qur'an
merantau	Indonesian	to go on a migration
miendo nobhala	Muna	big people, big men
miendo wite	Muna	territorial spirits
mieno nobhala	Muna	big person, big man
mieno wite	Muna	territorial spirit
modal	Indonesian	capital (monetary)
musyarawarah	Indonesian	consensus-seeking deliberation
na'i mo'ane	Muna	young men, younger generation
nakoda	Indonesian	ship's captain
One	Wolio	a neighbourhood in Boneoge
orang	Indonesian	person
orang besar	Indonesian	big person, big man
orang biasa	Indonesian	*papara*, commoners in the rank system of the Wolio Sultanate
orang tua	Indonesian	old person, elder
pahala	Indonesian	spiritual merit
pahika	Muna	*dukun* of fishing
panggil	Indonesian	to summon
papalele	Indonesian	A kind of fish trader
papara	Wolio	commoner rank, in the Wolio Sultanate
parabhela bhalano	Muna	the leader of the *Sara* council in Boneoge
pedagang	Indonesian	trader

Term	Language	Meaning
PELNI	Indonesian	Indonesian national shipping line
pengungsi	Indonesian	refugees
perahu	Indonesian	boat, sometimes refers to a small fishing boat, sometimes a shortened form of '*perahu lambo*'
perahu lambo	Indonesian	a type of wooden sailing vessel, 10-40 ton
perantau	Indonesian	migrant
pesta joget	Indonesian	dance party
pisah dapur	Indonesian	to establish one's own hearth; 'to separate the kitchen'
popolo	Wolio	bride price
posumanga	Muna	A prayer ceremony for the ancestors
preman	Indonesian	thug, criminal
puskesmas	Indonesian	community health centre
Ramadhan	Arabic/ Indonesian	the fasting month for Muslims
rantau	Indonesian	migration location
Rukun Tetangga (RT)	Indonesian	smallest administrative level in Indonesia, a group of 10-100 houses
Rukun Warga (RW)	Indonesian	second smallest administrative grouping in Indonesia, a number of RTs grouped together
rumah batu	Indonesian	concrete house
sahiga	Muna	household shrine
sangia	Muna	sacred, spiritually potent (see explanation in Chapter 8)
Sara	Muna	one of two leadership councils in Boneoge in the past; focused on administrative and *adat* matters
silat	Indonesian	Indonesian martial arts
siolimbona	Wolio	nine villages, refers to nine specific villages under the Wolio Sultanate, also used informally in Boneoge to refer to low nobles
sope-sope	Wolio	a type of wooden sailing vessel, smaller than perahu lambo
sukses	Indonesian	originating from the English word 'success'; refers to the new model of high status in Boneoge
sumanga	Muna	ancestor spirit
syirik	Indonesian	idolatry
Tampanalia	Wolio	A neighbourhood in Boneoge
tokoh adat	Indonesian	*adat* leader, *adat* expert
tuan tanah	Indonesian	territorial spirit, landlord
VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indishe Compagnie*)	Dutch	Dutch East India Company
Wa	Wolio, Muna	used in front of women's names in Buton
Wa Ode	Wolio	title for female nobles from the *kaomu* rank
walaka	Wolio	low noble rank, in the Wolio Sultanate
wari'	Bugis	the Bugis rank system

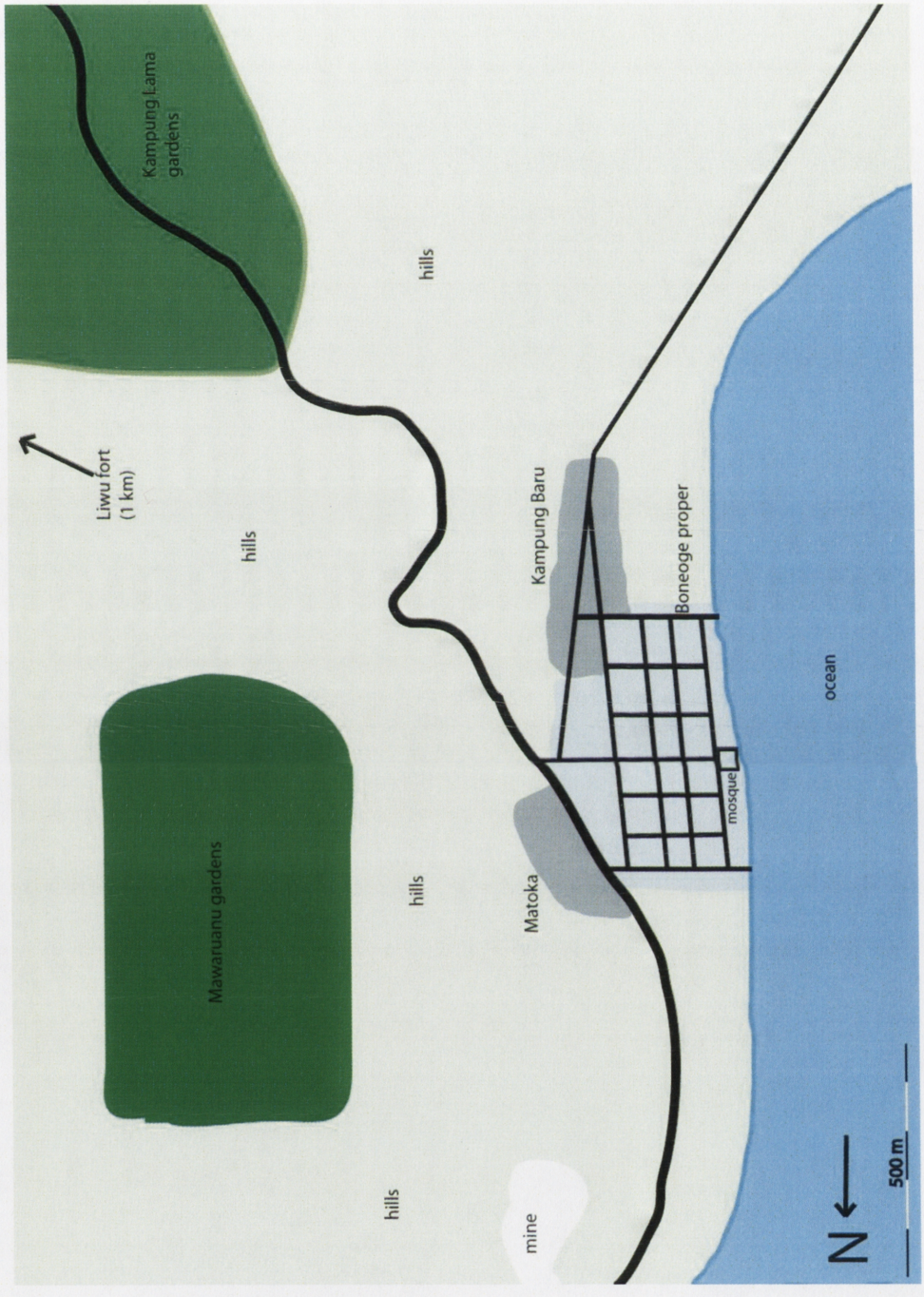
Maps

Map 1. Indonesia

Map 2. Buton region



Map 3. The village of Boneoge



CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Thesis Topic

Over the past half-century social change has swept across eastern Indonesia, with the emergence of the Indonesian state, the increasing penetration of capitalism, shifts in local forms of global religions, and new forms of mobility. Social life in Buton, Southeast Sulawesi, has been heavily affected by each of these shifts, with the dismantling of the Butonese Sultanate, the increasing prevalence of trading as an occupation, shifts and contestations in the expression of local versions of Islam, and extremely high rates of out-migration and circular migration.

Throughout this period of change, social status has remained a vital part of social life in Buton – the drive to achieve higher status can be said to be an obsession. Studying the status system is thus important for understanding contemporary Butonese society, but furthermore, the status system can reveal how Butonese society is changing. The status system hierarchically ranks people, but it is based on relative valuations of characteristics possessed by people – descent, wealth, age, charisma, and so on. The status system is not static but changes over time, as villagers place more or less value on particular characteristics. Studying changes in the status system can thus reveal broader processes of social change in the village, as people appropriate exogenous influences according to their current needs, lifestyles, and agendas.

This thesis examines changes in social status in a particular village, Boneoge, throughout this period of rapid social change, focusing on a number of different aspects of social life – including mobility patterns, economic life, kinship, and religion. This ethnographic study of the status system of Boneoge and how it is changing will illustrate how larger changes associated with globalisation – such as the rise of the nation-state, increasing population mobility, and the broader

reach of both the capitalist economic system and world religions – have impacted upon a particular local context in eastern Indonesia.

I originally arrived in Boneoge in 2000 intending to study social relations between returning migrants and locals, concentrating on those Butonese migrants who had recently returned to Buton from Ambon after the Ambon riots of 1999. Given that district records stated that over 3000 such 'refugees' had returned to Boneoge, a village of 2000 population, it seemed reasonable to assume that this would be a good place to examine the refugee-local dynamic, in order to understand how the memory of conflict was important to notions of ethnic identity. However, after arrival in Boneoge it soon became clear that the refugee-local dynamic was not as important as I had imagined. Rather, three different phenomena stood out as much more central to Boneoge social life.

First, migration was almost universal amongst Boneoge people, and although Ambon had been the most important destination during the past few decades, there were also a host of other destinations and styles of migration which were affecting Boneoge social life. The so-called refugees did not stand out as a distinct group facing distinct challenges. Rather, their situation was broadly similar to that of other Boneoge people, and after their return from Ambon many simply migrated again, utilising their powerful kin networks to find alternative destinations.

Second, the importance of status in Boneoge people's lives, and in their migration strategies, quickly became clear. Every interaction was constrained or substantially guided by considerations of status, and many interactions seemed to be solely about consolidating or challenging status positions. Migration was undertaken to establish and sustain livelihoods but also in order to achieve higher status within Boneoge society. Status thus emerged as an appropriate focus in attempting to understand Boneoge society.

Third, Boneoge was in the midst of rapid social change, which was being expressed in a number of tensions evident in the village. Agriculture had been virtually abandoned over the course of the past three decades, and trading had emerged as the new occupation of choice for almost all Boneoge villagers, undertaken through migration to eastern Indonesia. In addition, hundreds of young Boneoge men were working on international fishing boats, earning high

wages. These new and lucrative migration opportunities had led to increasing wealth disparities in the village.

Modernist Islam was in the ascendance in the village, and several traditional ceremonies had been informally prohibited, leading to tensions between villagers. The traditional political hierarchy in the village had been dissolved, in accordance with the abolition of the Wolio Sultanate in 1960 and the birth of the Indonesian state, and tensions remained over the role of traditional authority in the village. Taken together, these changes meant that the livelihoods, authority structures, religious practices, and mobility patterns of Boneoge people were radically different from those of a half-century ago.

These observations led me to focus my attention on the status system in Boneoge. This thesis attempts to provide answers for three key questions: what is the nature of the status system and how is it changing? What is the role of migration in those changes? And what can this examination tell us about social change in Boneoge more generally?

1.2 Social Status among the Butonese and Bugis

By 'social status' I mean the degree of respect or deference that one receives from one's fellows. This is distinct from what I refer to as 'rank', a hereditary system of categories of nobles and commoners. Social status, or for brevity, status, is thus not the same as rank. Status in Buton depends partly on rank, but also on many other characteristics.

Others have used different terms to refer to these concepts. Writing on Bugis society in nearby South Sulawesi, Errington (1989: 189) refers to what I call social status as 'prestige', and she further differentiates between the inherited or bestowed aspects of such prestige (such as noble blood), which she calls 'status' or 'rank', and the achieved aspects of such prestige (such as good character), which she calls 'standing'.[1] My use of 'rank' follows Acciaioli (1989) in his discussion of Bugis rank, but Lineton, also discussing Bugis society, uses 'status

[1] I will avoid assigning different terms to ascribed and achieved characteristics, since the distinction is often blurry, with so-called 'achieved' characteristics often depending on advantages of birth.

levels' or 'rank classes' (1975a: 99), and Schoorl, writing about Buton society, uses the term 'estates' (1994: 21).[2]

An appreciation of the importance of status in Butonese society runs through the few anthropological accounts of Buton, such as Schoorl (2003), Southon (1995), and Rudyansjah (2009) but the focus has been on describing the formal rules associated with the system of hereditary rank under the Butonese Sultanate, and not on describing how rank and other characteristics operate in everyday life to influence a person's social status.

According to the Butonese rank system, as described by Schoorl (2003) and by Rudyansjah (1997), people are grouped into four categories (named by Wolio language terms): *kaomu*, *walaka*, *papara*, and *batua*, corresponding roughly to high and low nobles, commoners, and slaves. The position of Sultan, rather than being passed down from father to son, was given to a member of the *kaomu* rank, selected as appropriate by a council of people from the *walaka* rank. Other high ranking offices in the Sultanate were designated either for *kaomu* only or for *walaka* only. The Sultanate was composed of 72 *kadié*, or semi-autonomous villages (Zahari 1977: 84), which were mostly populated by *papara* people (commoners). *Batua* consisted of *papara* who defaulted on debts or committed a serious offence, or captives of war (Rudyansjah 1997).[3]

In contemporary Butonese society, as became clear from my fieldwork, social status depends on more than just rank, with other qualities such as wealth, occupation, age, and religious behaviour also important (as they likely have been in the past). That is, along with the hierarchical system of rank, there are also a number of other considerations which inform notions of status but 'do not exhaust the ways of assessing and asserting status' (Acciaioli 2009: 78).[4] Social

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[2] Guinness uses 'social rank' to refer to 'stable marks of social worth' such as 'age, nobility, origin, landed property and occupation' (1986: 28-9), and 'social esteem' to refer to 'the respect that a community pays an individual on the basis of his performance or behaviour' (ibid.: 28). The interplay between these two (social rank and social esteem) determines the overall level of respect which an individual receives (which I call status). I prefer not to use such a distinction, as it somewhat mirrors the ascribed/achieved distinction, and suffers from the same limitations (see previous footnote).

[3] The notion of precedence is important in rank hierarchy, as both *kaomu* and *walaka* are considered to have (clearly established) descent from the founders of the Wolio kingdom whereas *papara* do not and are thus 'newcomers' (Rudyansjah 1997).

[4] Acciaioli, in the quote, was discussing structures of precedence in Bugis society. The concept of precedence has been used extensively in discussions of status in eastern Indonesian societies, and

status in Buton is not yet well understood, since the existing literature does not focus on outlining these factors and their relative importance.

However, much work has been done on social status in Bugis society. As in Buton, social status is a vital part of Bugis social life, and is partly based on a hereditary rank system. The Bugis also share a strong tradition of migration throughout eastern Indonesia which has recently brought new economic opportunities. Of course, there are many differences between Bugis and Butonese societies. Nevertheless, similarities in culture and recent history between Butonese and Bugis societies mean that given the lack of literature on Buton, the Bugis literature is the most appropriate place to look for insights relevant for understanding status in Buton.

Many ethnographies of Bugis society have attested to the importance of social status (Acciaioli 1989; Millar 1989; Chabot 1996; Pelras 1996), a core feature of social life (Errington 1989) and even an obsession among Bugis people (Lineton 1975a: 84). There is some disagreement, however, concerning the centrality of the system of hereditary rank (the *wari'* system) within the status system. Errington (1989), for example, gives an illuminating account of status-related interactions and notions of 'white blood' and potency which underlie the *wari'* system of rank. She has been criticised, however, for describing white blood as the key determinant of high status, in accordance with the viewpoint of her informants of noble rank, to the exclusion of other sources of status which are at least as important, especially in the lives of commoners (Brawn 1993: 20-21). Acciaioli found that amongst 'Bugis commoners in the sociogeographic periphery' (2004: 178), there was an alternative status hierarchy, based on occupation and economic achievement, which was more important than the *wari'* system (ibid.: 175; Acciaioli 1989: 294). Acciaioli's case is distinct both because the people in question were commoners and lived outside of the Bugis homeland amongst other ethnic groups (see Brawn 1993), but it underlines the fact that there are multiple views on what constitutes high status, especially between people of different rank.

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more recently attention has been paid specifically to disentangling precedence and hierarchy (Vischer 2009). Distinctions based on age, wealth, and occupation are more appropriately referred to as based on precedence rather than hierarchy, since they involve relative distinctions between individuals rather than fixed groupings within a hierarchy.

A key feature of the Bugis rank system is its flexibility to accommodate achievements such as wealth or leadership qualities. That is, there is room in the seemingly fixed rank system for high-achieving individuals to lay claim to a higher rank than they otherwise could have. A man who has distinguished himself (perhaps through education, occupation, or religious merit (Lineton 1975a: 122-30)) may lay claim to a higher rank (such as *andi*) either by purchasing it (Harvey 1974: 31-2) or by suddenly remembering a noble ancestor (Lineton 1975a; Pelras 1996). Chabot notes that the status system allows for ambitious men to rise in status if they are supported by a large group of kin (Lineton 1975a: 207). This suggests that rather than other qualities being considered more important than rank, these other qualities may inflate someone's rank (ibid.: 99), and in this sense, the rank system 'serves more as an idiom in which differences generated by a variety of ways of distinguishing people in various status continua can be retrospectively accommodated, rather than itself exclusively determining such distinctions' (Acciaioli 1989: 34). Without this flexibility the rank system may not have survived, given the intensely competitive nature of Bugis society (Millar 1989: 39).[5]

The Butonese rank system does not share the flexibility of the Bugis rank system. Rather than serving as an idiom through which status is understood, in Buton the rank system is in danger of becoming irrelevant in daily life. Highly educated or wealthy people may have much higher status than those with high rank, while not themselves being considered to have high rank. In Buton rank is generally inherited from one's father, whereas in the Bugis system a child's rank is intermediate between that of both parents (Lineton 1975a: 99); the ambiguity in the process of calculating intermediate ranks for Bugis children underpins the flexibility in the Bugis system. Since rank does not index status in Buton, studying rank will not provide a thorough understanding of social status in Buton. Instead, in order to understand status one must discover what characteristics are needed for high status, and their relative importance, as I attempt to do in this thesis.

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[5] 'The contradiction between an ascribed status exhaustively specified by marriage and descent on the one hand and a reliance on achieved success for validating claims to status on the other could thus be eased by such cultural and institutional mechanisms as retrospective attribution of nobility and the purchase of rank' (Acciaioli 1989: 39).

1.3 Changing Status among the Butonese and Bugis

The characteristics which influence social status are not static but change over time. The major aspects of social change mentioned above – the state, capitalism, Islam, and mobility – have each had impacts upon the status system in Buton. The formation of the state of Indonesia after World War II has meant that traditional authority structures, such as the Sultanate in Buton, have been eclipsed and undermined. The increasing reach of capitalism has provided many new opportunities to acquire wealth, and many changes in livelihoods, resulting in a decline in agriculture throughout the region.[6] The spread of modernist Islam has led to local struggles over religious practice, where the form of religious observances are highly contested, with impacts upon the types of behaviours and beliefs which are considered deserving of respect and status (see for example Lineton 1975a; Schiller 1997). New patterns of mobility throughout the region have brought economic opportunities, and many migrants have gone to urban areas where they are exposed to new lifestyles and values which they take with them if they return to the home village (see for example Rodenburg 1997). Together these changes have meant that what is important for high status has changed significantly over the past 50 years.

Faced with a lack of literature on status in Buton, I will again rely on literature on the Bugis. The Bugis status system has been recognised as being extremely dynamic, not just in the sense that the position of individuals within the system changes, but also in that the system itself (i.e. the characteristics which are worthy of high status) changes. Ammarell refers to a 'constant renegotiation of social status' (1999: 37). Millar writes that 'an essential dynamic of Bugis society...is that achievement leads to tension and competition, and competition leads to new hierarchies' (1989: 39). Clearly referring to change in the system itself, she notes that 'the assessment of social location is even more problematic because the standards by which people judge status change in accordance with factors both internal and external to Bugis society' (ibid.: 182). This dynamism is a key feature of Butonese social status as well.

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[6] In Indonesia, according to Booth, 'by the mid-1990s, a significant minority of rural households (around 27 percent according to the 1995 Intercensal Survey) had no involvement with agriculture at all' (Booth 2004: 29).

Pelras' comprehensive book on the Bugis includes a section on social change over the past decades, describing how the nobility have lost political power and thus access to wealth, and are being superseded by government employees, the educated, soldiers, Islamic teachers, and wealthy entrepreneurs (1996: 269-334).[7] However, the majority of the work on social status in Bugis society has focused on describing the status system as it exists at the time of the particular study, mentioning change only in passing. This literature thus provides hints about how the Bugis status system is changing without providing a comprehensive analysis of status change in a particular context, as this thesis intends to do for Buton.

However, it is clear from this literature that the broad outlines of change in the Bugis status system – the declining importance of the system of rank and other traditional hierarchies, changing access to wealth through migration opportunities, and shifts in the ways in which wealth is used to obtain high status – are similar to what I found in Buton.

In South Sulawesi, the traditional aristocracy retained leadership positions in the *swapraja* ('autonomous territories') until 1960, when the *swapraja* were replaced by districts headed by *bupati* (district heads) (Pelras 1996: 286-7). This meant that government officials had increased access to wealth and power at the expense of the nobles, and status shifted accordingly. Similarly, in Buton, the Wolio Sultanate was discontinued in 1960, and village leadership positions under the political structure of the Wolio Sultanate, which were passed down within particular families of noble rank, were also discontinued in many villages.

Lineton noted in 1975 that the importance of rank in Bugis society 'may in time give way to...the creation of a new upper class deriving its position from wealth and education' (1975a: 115). Nobles themselves realised this, according to a quote by a high noble informant of Errington's, who said, 'now is the era of '*demokrasi*' and the *rakyat* [the people, the many]. *Kesaktian* has disappeared from the world' (Errington 1989: 304). *Kesaktian* refers to mystical potency which underlies the system of rank, so this suggests the decline of the rank system and its associated ideology.

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[7] Mattulada listed non-noble elites in South Sulawesi as consisting of civil servants, intellectuals, and businessmen (cited in Pelras 2000: 33).

The transition from agricultural livelihoods to wage employment has increased income inequalities in rural Indonesia as elsewhere in the world (Booth 2004: 30). In Indonesia, improved transportation facilities and an increase in informal-sector jobs in developing urban areas drove a significant increase in population mobility during the 1970s and 1980s (Tirtosudarmo 1997).[8] In eastern Indonesia, the Bugis, Makassarese and the Butonese were the primary ethnic groups taking advantage of these new economic opportunities through migration (ibid.; see also Aditjondro 1986). Many Sulawesi migrants took advantage of these opportunities to engage in agricultural endeavours or small scale entrepreneurialism (Lineton 1975a; Acciaioli 1989; Pelras 1996). These opportunities meant that commoners could access wealth as never before.

These economic opportunities, combined with the loss of political power by the aristocrats, meant that by the 1970s the connection between wealth and nobility in Bugis society had weakened (Errington 1989: 111).[9] The increased possibilities for commoners to attain wealth led to a challenging of old status hierarchies in Sulawesi (Bigalke 2005), as was happening throughout Indonesia. Howe writes that in Bali, 'entrepreneurs...civil servants (including the army and the police) and low-caste wealthy landowners now compete with the old elites for political power, economic wealth, and ritual status' (Howe 1995: 43-4). Similarly, Kato described how amongst the Minangkabau of Sumatra, the aristocrats had been wealthy because of their control over land, but once migration offered new possibilities for obtaining wealth, their political and economic power could be challenged (1977: 244-8).

This raises the question of how this new wealth can be used to obtain power and status and thus challenge old elites. In historical Southeast Asian polities, 'wealth was not used to reproduce itself – that is, capital was not used to create more capital – but to attract and maintain followers' (Errington 1989: 109). In Bugis society, having followers was important in achieving social status and political power, as followers provided evidence of a leader's greatness (Pelras

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[8] Indonesia was characterised by rapid urbanisation from 1960 to 1990, with the urban population increasing from 14.8% in 1961 to 30.9% in 1990 (Hugo 1992: 175).

[9] In the past, the connection between nobility and wealth in Bugis society was clear. Errington (1989: 109) notes that *ToSugi* (meaning 'rich person') was a rank of nobility. She also notes that the Malay term *orang kaya* literally meant 'rich person' but actually referred in the past to 'a person of noble birth' (ibid.: 109).

2000). Political offices in Bugis society tended to be given to those who had strong followings, both because these people were more likely to be accepted by the people and because it was risky to disappoint them (Errington 1975a: 280).

Amongst the Bugis (and the Butonese), the wealthy and powerful have tended to engage followers through patron-client relations (Millar 1989: 182; Acciaioli 1989).[10] Patron-client relations have been important in South Sulawesi for at least three centuries and probably much longer, and are well suited to the traditional system of political power, the hierarchical nature of society, and the bilateral kinship system which does not lead to discrete groups such as clans or lineages (Pelras 2000). Pelras writes that in South Sulawesi the patronage system 'has pervaded all aspects of social life, whether in the economic or in the ideological fields, among peasants and fishermen, in trade and in navigation, in the countryside and in the cities' (2000: 22). Relations of patronage in South Sulawesi are often based on kinship bonds, as this may lead to a greater degree of loyalty from followers (Acciaioli 2000: 237). Similarly, Schrauwers notes that amongst the Pamona people of Central Sulawesi, the wealthy maintain extensive 'kinship-oriented' patronage networks centred on agricultural labour (2000: 153).

With the decline in the importance of the nobility in the twentieth century and the rise of new economic opportunities, patron-client relationships in fact remain strong in South Sulawesi. Acciaioli (1989) demonstrated how patron-client relationships played a key role in the economic organisation of the Bugis migrant community in Lindu, Central Sulawesi, as well as in the migration patterns which brought them there. However, the form of patron-client relationships has changed. Noble patrons have less to offer under the modernising Indonesian state (Errington 1989; Chabot cited in Pelras 2000: 24). Followers have less to offer also; in order to obtain high positions one needs not followers but connections to friends in high places (Pelras 2000: 32). Acciaioli describes a shift from 'patron' to '*bos*', where a *bos* does not contribute to 'external' needs (i.e. those outside of

[10] A patron-client relationship can be defined as: 'an unequal (but theoretically nonbinding) relationship between a superior (a patron or leader) and a number of inferiors (clients, retainers, or followers), based on an asymmetric exchange of services, where the de facto dependence on the patron of the clients, whose unpaid services may include economic obligations, paid or unpaid work, armed service, political support and other services, is counterbalanced by the role the patron plays as a leading figure for all the clients and by the assistance, including monetary loans and protection, he or she provides when necessary' (Pelras 2000: 16; see also Scott 1972).

the work relationship), and maintains his relations with his subordinates through debt rather than through social services (2000: 225). Patrons are no longer nobles but anyone of economic prominence (Pelras 2000: 53). Economic patrons, according to Meereboer, 'are not interested in obtaining political power, and the social aspects play a meaningful but subordinate role' (1998: 271). Pelras has found that the economic conditions of each industry lead to different forms of patron-client relationships (2000).

These findings point to unanswered questions about how the status system in Buton is changing – how new economic opportunities have arisen, who has managed to take advantage of them, the changing ways in which wealth is used to obtain high status, and the nature of the patron-client relations which persist – which this thesis will attempt to answer.

Rank, traditional authority, wealth, and patron-client ties...it is likely that all of these things have long been important for social status in Sulawesi, to different degrees, in different locations. Gibson has noted, however, that status in South Sulawesi lost coherence in the mid twentieth century:

> Between 1930 and 1970, the social hierarchy in South Sulawesi lost its coherence and split into crosscutting social, political, and ideological factions. Hereditary rank, government office, modern education, traditional Islamic learning, and new sources of wealth increasingly marked out distinct groups of people (Gibson 2005: 225).

That is, while in the past high status people tended to have high rank, office, wealth, followers, and highly valued religious knowledge, now high status people tend to possess only some of these characteristics. I will refer to this as a 'disentanglement' of elites. Similar observations have been made by Geertz (1965: 127) about Java in the 1950s and by Kato (1977: 251) about Minangkabau society in the 1970s, and indeed the same is true of Buton during the same period.[11] This disentanglement means that today people possessing *different* characteristics are competing for status, and implicitly, this represents a competition between the various characteristics which they possess. Through

[11] Geertz puts it like this: 'By 1953 the individual Modjokuto citizen's status was determined by a set of factors – occupation, wealth, family, place of residence, religion, taste, and perhaps most crucially, education – that were no longer so highly inter-correlated' (1965: 127). Kato writes that in Minangkabau society, that the village elite 'no longer have monopolistic control over politico-judicial power, wealth, knowledge, and prestige' (1977: 251).

status competition between disentangled elites, the community is implicitly negotiating which characteristics are most worthy of high status. Observing this process thus has the potential to reveal much about social change in the community in question.

While this process of disentanglement has been recognised by a number of researchers, the resulting competition over status has not been closely examined in a particular context as a way of understanding the implicit negotiation over characteristics and the direction of social change. This thesis attempts to do so for a community in Buton.[12]

Migration has played a key role in the competition for status in Buton. The Butonese are extremely active migrants, having migrated to various locations in eastern Indonesia for centuries, but in contrast to the Bugis, little is known about the patterns, motivations, and strategies of Butonese migration.[13] In order to understand how status has changed in Buton, it will be necessary to describe the prevalent patterns of migration during recent decades and how the experiences of Butonese migrants have led them to become key players in the changes taking place in Buton. This thesis will therefore address the lack of research on Butonese migration.

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[12] It should be noted that the particular characteristics possessed by newly disentangled elites may be different in each context. In my research village, for example, the educated did not emerge as a particularly important group. Gibson (2005: 225) mentions Islamic learning; note that I discuss the importance of religious knowledge for status in the next section below.

[13] Literature on Butonese migration includes Bahtiar and Tenrilawa (1997), Tenri (1998), and Munafi (2001), but none of these deals in depth with the social effects of circular migration. Bahtiar and Tenrilawa (1997) analyse factors which lead to international migration among the Butonese, focusing on economic and environmental factors such as infertile land, the land ownership system, and exploitative patron-client relations in Buton. They deny the existence of a cultural 'drive' to migrate. Neither internal migration, nor the effects on the home village, is discussed in detail. A thesis by Tenri (1998) examines how the motivations for sailing endeavours have changed over the centuries, and why sailing has not led to wealth, for sailors from the Tukang Besi islands. The Butonese anthropologist Munafi (2001) examines cosmological aspects of Butonese migration. He argues that migration, or *langke* (meaning 'to go'), has strong roots in Butonese cosmology, where Butonese people strive to convert 'outside areas' to become part of the 'Butonese world' by obtaining possession of land, houses, boats, and children there. Munafi argues that self-respect, or *pangke*, is a primary motivation for migration, and translates *pangke* into Indonesian as both *harga diri* (self-respect) and *martabat* (dignity, rank, status), thus affirming the importance of status as a motivation for migration. He does not discuss comprehensively the various aspects of what Butonese migrants strive for, nor the nature of the social dynamics between the *rantau* (migration location) and the home village, nor the impacts of differential success on social life in Buton. Although my fieldwork did not uncover the ideological motivation for migration which he describes, this may be due to the fact that he studied a different ethnic group, the Tukang Besi, who although included under the rubric 'Butonese' are actually a different ethno-linguistic sub-group to the people of Boneoge.

Achieving higher social status is one of the primary motivations for Butonese migration (Munafi 2001), as has been found for several other Indonesian ethnic groups including the Bugis (Davis 1976).[14] Robinson describes the important characteristics of Bugis migration, giving a list which closely matches my own observations of Butonese migration: the importance of status considerations, a cognatic kinship system, entrepreneurialism, the desire to go on the *hajj* pilgrimage (many times if possible), innovation and adaptability, networks of patronage, tightly knit social groups in the migration location, and allegiance to place of origin or a particular leader (2002: 155-6). Acciaioli (1989: 324) gives a similar list. These characteristics, especially entrepreneurialism and patronage networks, will be discussed at length in later chapters as they are important in explaining how the status system has changed in Buton.

Connections between migration and status have been discussed at length in work on Bugis migration, in particular in the theses by Lineton (1975a) and Acciaioli (1989). Both of these theses examine cases of long-term migration to rural areas, with Lineton examining a 'sending community' and Acciaioli a 'receiving community'. Although in past decades migration was indeed characterised by long term settlement in rural areas (Kato 1977: 186), much Butonese migration in recent times involved circular migration to urban centres in eastern Indonesia, with migrants returning to their home village after a period of some months or years.[15] Circular migrants returning home can bring with them wealth, ideas, and lifestyles that can lead to a 'rejigging of local hierarchies', as Gardner found in Bangladesh (1995: 272). The literature on Bugis migration does not cover this kind of situation, an analytically important one as it involves the transmission of social effects of urbanisation back to the village.

In their theses both Lineton and Acciaioli deal with contestation of status hierarchies. Acciaioli describes how Bugis migrants engage in a 'search for good

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[14] Other Indonesian examples are discussed in Chapter 3.

[15] Note that data sources on circular migration in Indonesia are generally poor. The Indonesian Census cannot give accurate data on circular migration since it only records journeys of more than six months (Forbes 1981: 53). Before 2000, the national Census did not have a question on ethnic group. Questions relevant to migration included only birthplace, place of current residence, place of previous residence, and place of residence five years ago (Tirtosudarmo 2000: 177). Hugo (1982) calls attention to the general lack of understanding about circular migration in Indonesia and its important social consequences.

fortune', with consecutive waves of Bugis migrants to the Lake Lindu region of Central Sulawesi eventually achieving the political, economic and spiritual domination of the region (Acciaioli 1989). Status in Lineton's 'home village', the agricultural village of Ana'banua, depended mostly on rank, and nobles controlled access to agricultural land. Lineton argues that long-term migration removes the ambitious and able young people so that the nobility can maintain their political power in the homeland (Lineton 1975a: 208). The case in Buton is different, as agricultural land is not valuable due to its low fertility, and nobles retain less power than in Bugis society. How migration practices are related to the status system in Buton thus remains to be specified.

1.4 Religion and Status Change

A missing element from the above discussion of change in the status system has been religious change. Islam has been tightly connected with status dynamics, including with the challenging of old hierarchies, especially amongst traders in Southeast Asia, as described by Ellen:

> From the very beginning...[Islam] was associated and identified with trade and change, and signified individualism and social mobility. It provided a justification and channel for the acquisition of new forms of wealth and power, and a reservoir of new leaders. It rejected tribalism and the ossified hierarchy and theatricality of traditional Hindu states....Trading groups, organised into separate ethnic quarters, focussed on the mosque and market rather than the court. Islam provided a means by which the beneficiaries of material change could acquire status (1983: 75).

New sources of wealth, new religious ideas, and a rejection of old hierarchies often went together, as was the case for Butonese traders migrating to cities in eastern Indonesia. This has been the case in Indonesia throughout the twentieth century, with widespread conversion from 'traditional' religions to Islam, as well as various stages of 'purification' of Islam undertaken by 'modernist' Muslims pushing for the removal of 'impure' elements of Indonesian Islam. It has been argued that there is a particular affinity between 'the social logic of small-scale trade and modernist Islamic ideas' (Bowen 1993: 34), similar to what Weber argued for Protestantism and capitalism.

Struggles over competing religious beliefs are related to status, as these struggles influence the kinds of religious knowledge and behaviour which are

seen as worthy of respect. It has been observed that in Sulawesi modernist Islam has empowered people to challenge traditional hierarchies (Errington 1989: 173), often specifically targeting rituals which underpin systems of noble rank (Gibson 2005: 233).[16] In the case of Buton, migrants to urban areas, who frequently worked as traders, acquired modernist Islamic ideas and brought them back to their home villages in Buton, where they used them to discredit traditional beliefs which underpinned old hierarchies such as the rank system.

Much has been written about tensions between modernist and traditionalist Muslims which focus on ritual practices related to propitiation of spirits.[17] Some level of conflict between Islam and spirit beliefs in the region has been going on for centuries (Reid 1993: 158), and more recent attempts at Islamic purification in many places have focused on the prohibition of agricultural ceremonies. In its early years the Indonesian state made concerted efforts to stamp out spirit-based ceremonies throughout the archipelago (Lineton 1975a: 67). This continued during the early New Order period (from 1966 until the mid 1970s) when the spectre of communism was utilized to encourage villagers to distance themselves from local religions and to embrace one of the five officially sanctioned world religions.[18] Gibson writes that in South Sulawesi, 'the period since 1965 is best characterized as a 'cold war' between the adherents of the old spirit cults, traditional Sufism and Islamic modernism' (1994: 61).

Buton, similar to many societies in the region, has a strong tradition of respect for elders, based in part upon a belief in their supernatural potency.[19] These beliefs legitimate the power and status held by elders; for example, amongst the Kayan of Kalimantan, 'the gerontocratic slant of Kayan social life is echoed in

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[16] Gardner points out that Islamic revivalism has often been linked to political resistance and inequality (1995: 240).

[17] Examples abound of religious disputes focusing on spirit beliefs in Sulawesi (Lineton 1975a: 131; Acciaioli 1985; Nourse 1999; Aragon 2000: 162; Pelras 2002: 131; Bigalke 2005: 125, 296; Gibson 2005: 217) and in the wider region (Bowen 1993: 173-4; Tsing 1993; Schiller 1999; Chambert-Loir and Reid 2002: xxvi). On similar religious tensions during the Dutch period see Aragon (2000: 229) and Rodenburg (1997: 48).

[18] Those not adhering to a 'world religion' (*agama*) could be portrayed as communists – and communists were often executed during this period: 'Religious identity became a life and death issue for many Indonesians...in the wake of the violent anti-Communist purge of 1965-1966' (Beatty cited in Reuter 2001: 331).

[19] Millar, clarifying the distinction between age and personality for Bugis elders, writes '*Tau matoa* translates literally as 'elder', but commonly refers to a man or woman who...possesses such an authoritative, wise, courageous, and articulate personality that others turn to her for guidance and leadership' (1989: 6).

the belief that elders, like aristocrats, are imbued with supernatural power; lack of respect towards them brings the risk of supernatural sanction' (Rousseau 1998: 327). Ethnographers have remarked that throughout the region elders are seen as similar to spirits in their need for respect and the threat of supernatural sanctions if they do not receive it (Aragon 2000; see also Chambert-Loir and Reid 2002).[20] What happens to this respect for the elderly, though, when the legitimating beliefs, and the rituals which serve to reinforce them, are suppressed? It is known, for instance, that during the colonial period in Indonesia, the Dutch attempted to erode traditional authority by outlawing sacrifices (Rodenburg 1997: 48). Connections between suppressed rituals and the high status of elders have not been adequately described.

Literature on religious contestation and change has generally not been well integrated into discussions of changes in social status. Religious change is, of course, tightly interconnected with political and economic changes as well as migration patterns, and thus while this thesis is not about religion per se, it will devote substantial attention to issues of religious change in order to explore changes in the status system. This section will raise several points about how religious change is related to status, discussing how terminology can be used to delegitimize particular beliefs, and touching on the hilltop-coastal distinction and the modern-traditional distinction.

The terms used to denote different religious ideas are important, as the terms themselves can play a delegitimizing role in the struggle over the status of these ideas. The terms used by locals are part of the struggle over what constitutes appropriate religious practice, a struggle for symbolic hegemony of which dismissing the authenticity of alternate beliefs and practices is a part. Unreflective use of local terms by researchers thus risks implicitly supporting one side or the other, and can conceal more than is revealed (Hooker 2003: 230-1). Commonly used terms in the literature on religious diversity in Indonesian Muslim societies include orthodox vs. syncretic Islam, Hindu and animist 'leftovers', *adat* (custom) vs. Islam, and modernist vs. traditionalist. Each of these terms will be discussed in turn.

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[20] Aragon has noted that the word *pue'* can mean 'grandparent' and is also a title for spirits (2000: 169).

Religious disputes are sometimes described as opposing proponents of orthodox Islam and syncretic Islam, following Geertz (1964) and others. However, the use of the term syncretic has been criticised for implying that there is a 'pure' form with which other elements 'mix', whereas in fact the idea of a universal Islam, or even a uniform authentic Islam in the Middle East, is problematic (Aragon 2000: 46; Newland 2001: 324; Hooker 2003). The term syncretic thus lends moral weight to its opposite; Geertz's division of Javanese religious practices into a more 'pure' Islam (of the *santri*) and a more syncretic Islam (of the *abangan*) has been criticised on this basis (Hefner 1997: 13-17). Rather than there being a 'pure' Islam somewhere, Islam is distinctive in every context, and it is better to see local Islam as fluid rather than syncretic (Gardner 1995: 230).[21] Woodward's (1989) term 'Javanese Islam' partially overcomes the drawbacks of the term 'syncretic Islam', but still sends the message that its opposite, 'normative Islam', is more pure, which is precisely the argument of its proponents.

Modernist Muslims, including those in Buton, often refer to particular religious practices as 'Hindu' or 'animist' leftovers. Although these labels may reflect what modernists actually believe, they also serve to delegitimize contentious rituals (and the people who approve of them) by demarcating them as non-Islamic, as Newland found in West Java (2001: 315).[22] Similarly, many modernists in Indonesians associate making offerings to spirits with animism or 'worshipping rocks and trees' (Woodward 1989: 217), practices which are an embarrassing part of their pre-Islamic ignorance and have now been left behind by proper Muslims. The terms 'Hindu' and 'animist' have become pejorative among modernist Muslims in Indonesia. They also homogenise a variety of different beliefs and practices under a single label, which is a distortion.[23]

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[21] Incidentally, religious diversity in Buton is not easily mapped onto Geertz's *santri/abangan* distinction for Java, for the same reasons as Pelras has indicated for the Bugis: the situation is more complex, with variations in the extent to which particular individuals endorse pre-Islamic religious traditions and/or Muslim traditions of various streams, and to what extent their religious practices conform to those ideas (Pelras 1985: 129-30).

[22] For example, as a part of the New Order project to render Nahdlatul Ulama less powerful, certain religious ritual forms were designated as 'archaic survivals of a Hindu past' (Newland 2001: 324).

[23] The use of the term 'animism' has been criticised since it is used to refer to 'anything ranging from diffuse energies throughout the environment to notions of ancestor worship, thereby homogenising quite different orientations to the world' (Newland 2000: 200). Similarly, Pannell

In Buton, some people discuss their religious differences in terms of what is '*adat*' and what is 'Islam'. There are a host of problems in attempting to use these terms to accurately describe religious diversity. First, the two terms do not have constant or unambiguous meanings. Dutch colonial administrators attempted to separate the concepts of Islam and *adat* (Newland 2001: 314), but, as Hefner put it, 'this distinction between endogenous "custom" and exogamous "Islam" imposed an artificial polarity on a relationship that had always been dynamic' (Hefner 1997: 12). Second, the beliefs which make up *adat* vary within an ethnic group, and even within a particular village. As pointed out by Li after researching the Laujé people in Sulawesi, 'there are, of course, many beliefs and practices of a spiritual nature relating to ancestors as well as to features of the landscape, but these are described as matters of personal, family, or at most hamlet-wide conviction, rather than pan-Laujé tradition' (Li 2000: 160). Third, it is difficult to distinguish between the two spheres since many ritual practices depend on elements blended together from a number of different traditions (Ellen 1983: 64-70). As Kipp and Rodgers put it, '*adat* and Islam mutually define each other' (1987: 4). It is preferable to acknowledge various forms of Islam, or as Eickelman put it, *islams* rather than *Islam*, for example, the *islams* of the literate and the illiterate, of theologians and of peasants (Eickelman 1982: 1).

According to Ellen, 'what *adat* and Islam really provide are extensive reservoirs of metaphor, symbols and means of justification which can be employed to defend other (more concrete) interests' (1983: 70). People tend to appropriate outside ideologies which are suitable to their current interests – whether religious, political or personal (see Rossler 1997: 275). That is, through studying the use of these terms within the local context, we can uncover local interests and agendas which relate to religious change and status (see Nourse 1999). Interpreting struggles over religious practice also requires paying attention to the local context of power and inequality and the broader economic and political context (Reuter 2001: 327).[24]

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has pointed out that in Indonesia 'Hindu' is a gloss for 'pre-Islamic indigenous ancestor-based religions' (Pannell 2003: 21).

[24] A community's reaction to outside influences is shaped by the divisions, inequalities, and tensions within that community; groups or individuals currently disadvantaged with respect to social status or power may see new opportunities to challenge existing hierarchies during times of change (Reuter 2003: 203).

In discussing struggles over the status of religious ideas in Buton I will use the labels 'modernist Muslims' and 'traditionalist Muslims' (or 'modernists' and 'traditionalists' for short). I will follow Bowen's use of these terms, which are as follows. Modernists believe in a single correct interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadiths (the collected sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), with deviations from this interpretation being considered improper innovation (or *bid'ah*). Traditionalists, by contrast, feel that scripture is ambiguous and multiple interpretations are possible, meaning that one should accept variety in the form of rituals – and this means that traditionalists may be tolerant of seemingly non-Islamic ritual behaviour (Bowen 1993: 21-5). I use these terms as ideal types, in that people do not always fall neatly into one category or the other; a range of views are present, with some individuals sharing characteristics of both camps. Nevertheless, for most villagers it is clear in which camp their commitment lies, especially when considering a particular issue such as the permissibility of agricultural rituals featuring propitiation of territorial spirits.

Contestations over religious practice between modernists and traditionalists in Buton recall the familiar dichotomy between coastal Muslim traders and hilltop agriculturalists, common in the ethnography of Indonesia (e.g. Nourse 1999), where the former enjoy higher status than the latter. Buton has a long history of complementarity between agricultural and maritime lifestyles, and between farming and fishing in particular, where farmers from the hilltops traded surplus agricultural products for fish or foreign goods from local sailor/traders (see Southon 1995). Gibson observed a similar complementarity in South Sulawesi and noted that the maritime lifestyles are associated with higher status (2005: 163).

Li found that differences between highland and lowland groups in Sulawesi are tightly connected to political and economic disparities, even though differences are often cast in cultural or ethnic terms (see Li 1999: 1-4). Li called for cultural differences to be examined by looking at the relational histories, historical forces, and varying patterns of migration which have helped to produce differences: 'In place of the distinct peoples and cultures that once formed the object of ethnographic inquiry, anthropologists have for some time been emphasizing...the ongoing *production* of cultural difference in contexts of

unequal power' (Li 2001: 41).[25] Differences between the religion of hilltop agriculturalists and that of coastal traders are often exaggerated in pursuit of particular goals related to identity and status.[26]

Portraying highlanders as bumpkins who follow outdated religious ideas makes use of a contrast between 'modern' and 'traditional' where the modern has higher status. Efforts to portray oneself as 'modern', or what Schein calls the 'performance of modernity' (Schein 1999), can be related to efforts to achieve status, and part of those efforts might involve proclaiming a lack of belief in traditional things (see Pigg 1996). In fact, though, the terms 'modern' and 'traditional' mutually constitute each other, and are intertwined in local agendas of change (Kahn cited in Schrauwers 2000: 22).

Being Muslim, as opposed to continuing to adhere to local religion, does indeed enjoy a positive association with notions of modernity, as attested to by various ethnographers of South and Central Sulawesi. Rossler writes that 'the population often perceives modern development and Muslim identity as intimately related; to be 'modern' is to be Muslim' (1997: 275). As Atkinson put it, '[global] religion thus becomes a badge for the educated, the progressive, and the nationalistic' (1988: 50), while local religion is something of a badge for the uneducated, the 'traditional', and the 'feudal'. This is the case in Buton as well where notions of modernity are employed in struggles over religious ideas as well as over status.

In any society, individuals hold particular levels of status through an informal consensus of their fellows, where opinions are neither uniform nor permanent but sufficient consensus exists for it to be generally acknowledged who has high status and who does not. People indicate how much status they accord a person by the way they treat him or her, through the degree of deference in their speech

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[25] See also Gupta and Ferguson for a similar call to focus on the relations which produce difference: 'if we question a pre-given world of separate and discrete 'peoples and cultures', and see instead a difference-producing set of relations, we turn from a project of juxtaposing preexisting differences to one of exploring the construction of differences in historical process' (1992: 16).

[26] For example, Nourse found that in Central Sulawesi, although 'the government said animism was the highlanders' religion, Islam the lowlanders'... Islam had crept into all the nooks and crannies of highland life while various magical and healing beliefs prevailed in [the lowland region of] Tinombo' (1999: 30).

and mannerisms or through other signs (such as seating plans at Bugis weddings, as found by Millar (1989)).

The disentanglement of elites that has occurred in Buton and elsewhere means that many individuals score high on one component of status but low on others. When villagers decide how to treat a person of ambiguous status, they implicitly place a relative value on the characteristics which he or she possesses. A multitude of these everyday interactions lead to a rough consensus on the person's status, which represents an implicit evaluation of the relative importance of these characteristics.[27] This consensus can change over time, however, as some characteristics come to be valued more highly and others less highly.[28] In this sense a status system can be said to be in a state of constant renegotiation.

Shifts in the status system are connected to, and revealing of, broader patterns of social change. The portrait of social change which emerges is not one of wholesale replacement of local traditions by hegemonic global forms, but rather of a gradual, negotiated process whereby local actors with particular agendas interpret, evaluate, and appropriate these global forms in particular ways, a process embedded in small scale events and everyday village interactions. Disentanglement of elites has prompted more rapid negotiations over the characteristics most important for status. This thesis traces that process.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 introduces the location where the study was done. It reviews the literature on Buton, describes the history of Butonese settlements as fluctuating between marine-focused and territorial-focused lifestyles, introduces the village of Boneoge where the research took place, and describes the methodology used.

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[27] Of course, contestation also occurs over the position of individuals within the status system; it is possible for individuals to claim higher status positions without altering the system itself. For instance, if an individual acquires more wealth, she might move up in status, without threatening the system. On the other hand, if a wealthy commoner claims higher status than a poor noble, and other villagers endorse this distinction over time, this may represent a shift in the status system whereby wealth is considered more important and noble blood less so.

[28] Shifts in the status system occur slowly and gradually, perhaps similar to the process of religious conversion, which takes place not through the immediate substitutions of new beliefs and practices but through 'progressive negotation' (Chambert Loir and Reid 2002: xxiii).

Boneoge migration is described in Chapter 3. Migration is a part of life for almost all Boneoge people, and has played a key role in the changes in the status system. At any one time, many Boneoge migrants undertake similar journeys, but the nature of these journeys has changed radically from decade to decade, as migrants adapt to changing political and economic conditions in the region. Boneoge people describe the history of migration in terms of 'eras' ('*jaman*'), where each recent historical period is remembered as the 'era' of a particular migration destination. Throughout this time, Boneoge migrants have remained anchored to the Boneoge community, where the behaviours, beliefs, and values which they bring home with them have contributed to changes in the status system.

Chapter 4 describes the importance of social status in Boneoge society, and the characteristics which are important for status, including the hereditary system of rank, village office, knowledge of *adat*, wealth, Islamic reputation, age, gender, kinship/patronage networks, education and occupation. More attention is paid to the characteristics which have now faded in importance, as those which remain most important are the subject of later chapters. This chapter also describes how status is contested, which is important for understanding not only how individuals achieve higher (or lower) status over time, but also how the status system itself can change.

The remaining chapters examine changes in the status system with regards to economic livelihoods and wealth (Chapter 5), kinship and patronage (Chapter 6), and religion (Chapters 7 and 8). Chapter 5 discusses the rise of trading as a popular and lucrative livelihood and the implications for the status system. Farming and sailing have been abandoned by the majority of Boneoge people. Many Boneoge people became traders in or after the 1970s in Ambon; some have achieved considerable wealth, and economic disparities within the village are increasing. A small group of very wealthy traders now enjoy the highest status in Boneoge, and provide a model which almost all young people desire to emulate, a model referred to in Boneoge as '*sukses*'. The concept of *sukses* represents the new emphasis in the status system. Several aspects of social change related to these economic developments are discussed, including changes

in kinship relations where economic disparities are high, and in the ideology of work.

The changing role of kinship and patronage in the status system is the focus of Chapter 6. This chapter argues that the rise of capitalism and migration opportunities has not been accompanied by a breakdown of institutions of patronage in Boneoge social and economic relations, nor by a breakdown of kinship. Rather, there have been shifts in the patrons and the services exchanged, and in the way kinship has been utilised. Patronage networks no longer centre on semi-hereditary village leaders or those of high rank, but instead centre on successful traders who can provide kin-clients with employment opportunities – which in practice means migration opportunities. Kinship is the primary mechanism through which individuals seek migration opportunities and, if successful, build patronage networks which anchor them, and raise their status, within the Boneoge community. These kin-based networks have been instrumental in Boneoge patterns of migration over the past decades, and especially in enabling the trading lifestyle and in dealing with changing political and economic conditions such as the 1999 Ambon riots. Importantly, these networks are one way in which *sukses* (and 'achieved' status) spreads through families. Since such networks have not been well described in the literature, this chapter devotes considerable attention to describing their characteristics, which include a valorisation of pioneers, the practice of 'kin-summoning', and village endogamy.

The final two chapters trace connections between religious change and the changes in the status system. Chapter 7 describes the main tension in current religious practice in Boneoge, an ideological struggle between 'modernists' and 'traditionalists' over whether rituals propitiating territorial spirits are in contradiction with Islam. This conflict is closely related to the economic developments discussed earlier. The shift towards modernist Islam, which has occurred throughout Indonesia, has impacted upon Boneoge people particularly through those migrants who became traders and settled in port cities of eastern Indonesia. Few people continue to farm in Boneoge, and the *adat* knowledge associated with farming and the ritual protection of the Boneoge landscape is less in demand now. This has had implications for the status of farming-related *adat*

knowledge, farming as a livelihood, and farmers. The Boneoge neighbourhood of Kampung Baru, which continues to be associated with farming, has come to act as a kind of counterpoint to modern Boneoge identity; Kampung Baru stands for a past of farming and *adat* rituals which most Boneoge people want to leave behind.

Chapter 8 continues the discussion about religion, now turning to connections between changes in religious ideology and changes in the status of elders, old people with valued traditional knowledge. The high status and mystical power of Boneoge elders (called '*kamokula*' (BM), meaning 'old men') is naturalised in the local cosmology, where there are similarities between the mystical power of living elders, ancestors, and local territorial spirits. All must be 'respected' in similar ways, and disrespect is punished through naturally occurring punishments. This has served to reinforce the importance of age and *adat* knowledge for high status. Over the past half century, however, this cosmology has been eroded, as described in the previous chapter. At the same time, political and economic changes have weakened the position of elders within Boneoge society. Processes of economic, political, and religious change have thus coincided to weaken the 'gerontocratic slant' (Rousseau 1998: 327) of Boneoge life, and to strengthen the new '*sukses*' model of status in Boneoge.

CHAPTER 2
BUTON: BETWEEN LAND AND SEA

This chapter introduces the location where the research took place: the village of Boneoge in the district of Buton, Southeast Sulawesi province, Indonesia. A brief outline of existing anthropological and historical work on Buton is followed by an explanation of the shifting between maritime-based and territorial-based livelihoods which has characterised Buton's history. The village of Boneoge is then briefly described. The final section presents an account of the methodology used for this research.

2.1 Buton

The name 'Buton' refers both to the island of Buton, off the coast of the southeast peninsula of Sulawesi, and to Buton District (*kabupaten*), in the province of Southeast Sulawesi. Buton District comprises the southern end of Buton and Muna Islands, as well as numerous smaller islands. These regions were once under the dominion of the Sultanate of Buton (with its court at Wolio[29]), as were several other nearby regions which split off from Buton District in the post-1999 regional autonomy era.[30] Before these splits Buton District comprised 6463 km^2, with a population of approximately 450,000 (BPS 2001).[31] Hereafter the term 'Buton' will refer to the district, before the recent splits. (See Map 1 and Map 2 on pp.xvii-xviii).

One account of the origin of the name 'Buton' is from the Arabic '*butuuni*', meaning 'pregnant stomach' (Rudyansyah 1997: 51) or 'stomach' (Yunus 1995: 12). The name 'Butun' is mentioned as early as 1364, in the *Negarakertagama* (a fourteenth century Javanese manuscript); the great Majapahit leader Gajah Mada

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[29] The name 'Wolio' refers to the Sultanate, as well as the location at which the Sultanate was based, in Baubau. The Sultanate was based in a walled fort (the '*keraton*') on a hill looking out over the town of Baubau. Different to the Yogyakarta *keraton* which just houses the Sultan's residence, the Wolio *keraton* contains not only the main mosque and the residences of several past Sultans, but also a village and public roads.

[30] These include the Tukang Besi islands, which became Wakatobi District, and the island of Kabaena and part of mainland southeast Sulawesi, which became Bombana District.

[31] This figure does not include the perhaps 60,000 refugees from Ambon who came to Buton in 1999 and 2000.

is said to have listed Buton as one of the territories under Majapahit control (ibid.: 11).[32] Although the Arabic derivation of 'Buton' is popular amongst Butonese people, who wish to emphasise a connection with the Middle East as the source of Islam, it is likely that Arabic influence was not strong in Buton so early; Buton accepted Islam in the sixteenth century (ibid.: 11-14). The name is more likely to have come from the *butun* trees (Latin: *barringtonia asiatica*) which were common on the south coast of Buton; the spice trade shipping route from Malacca to Maluku went past this coast and was in use by the fourteenth century, and might have led passing sailors to name the region after the common trees on the coastline (ibid.: 13).

Buton is flat (the elevation does not rise above 1200m), dry, not very fertile, and sparsely populated. The majority of the population engages in farming and fishing. Irrigated rice paddies are rare, and most farming in Buton centres on cassava and maize, using a system of rotating fallow amongst fields near the village. Recent exports from Buton have included (unprocessed) asphalt, copra and cashew nuts (Kristanto et. al. 1989). Much of the population is coastal and fishing and seaweed cultivation are common. Buton is a remote location; until the late 1990s one had to take a 24 hour journey on a wooden ship from the provincial capital of Kendari to get to Buton (and since then, it is still a four hour speedboat trip). Buton's lack of economic development is apparent to any visitor. Migration for employment is widespread through many parts of Buton, with Ambon being the most important migration location over the past centuries (ibid.: 579).

Butonese people are approximately 99% Muslim (BPS 2001). The Buton area is ethnically diverse, with at least 14 different ethno-linguistic groups subsumed under the 'Butonese' label (Fox 1995). The court language of Wolio is spoken by not more than 50,000 people, mostly in the capital city of Baubau; other major languages include Muna, Cia-cia, and Tukang Besi.[33] The Muna language is spoken by 230,000 people, with several common dialects (van den Berg 1996), throughout the island of Muna including that portion of the island which falls in

[32] Buton used to be called 'Butung', or 'Boetoeng' in the pre-1969 Indonesian spelling; these seem to be based on Bugis/Makassarese rendering of 'Butun'.

[33] Many ethnic Sama people (referred to in Indonesia as 'Bajau') also reside in the Buton region.

Buton District (and includes the village of Boneoge). Without a lingua franca, Butonese people often resort to speaking Indonesian with each other, unless they happen to originate from the same linguistic group.[34]

Butonese oral history suggests that the 6th King of Buton ruled in the mid-1500s, which might indicate that the Kingdom was founded in the early fifteenth century (Yunus 1995: 18; Schoorl 1985: 104). The early years of the Buton polity remain unknown. According to Butonese oral histories now recorded in manuscript form, the kingdom of Buton emerged after an odd assortment of characters came to the island: a wandering lord from Johor (or four of them), a General under Kublai Khan, a prince of the Majapahit empire, and the mystical first 'king', the female Wakaakaa, who sprung forth from a rock (Zahari 1977), or, in other accounts, came from China or emerged from a bamboo plant.

This array of characters does in fact resonate with several known facts. Several of the first five Wolio kings listed in these oral histories had Javanese-type names, for example 'Tuarade'. The Javanese noble title 'Tuan Raden', when pronounced with the Butonese habit of dropping the final consonant which persists today, would be 'Tuarade'. This, and the mention of Buton by Gajah Mada, point to a strong connection with the Majapahit empire in the early years of the Buton Kingdom. Reid (1996: 21) has described several waves of Chinese sailors or soldiers settling in the archipelago during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and one in 1293 when Kublai Khan sent soldiers to punish King Kertanegara. These local accounts seem to somewhat match Reid's comment that the Majapahit empire incorporated some 'Chinese-descended sailors and traders who had made local bases in the Archipelago, and Muslim merchants spreading eastward from their centres in Pasai (northern Sumatra) and eastern Java' (ibid.: 21)

Again according to local oral histories, the 6th King converted to Islam in 1540 (see La Ode Madu 1983, Zahari 1977). Both Zuhdi (1999) and Yunus (1995) record this claim, and Yunus also cites other evidence that Islam was

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[34] Although the Butonese are ethnically diverse, migrants from islands within the Butonese Sultanate 'still claim an identity based on this historical allegiance' (Fox 1998: 123). Vermeij has described how the diversity of ethnic groups within Buton can be traced to the formation of the Sultanate, when support from the VOC (*Vereenigde Oost-Indishe Compagnie*, or Dutch East India Company) allowed the Sultan to unify the different groups in the region under its power (Vermeij 2000).

present in Buton by the early 1400s (ibid.: 19). An alternate, and more likely, account is that Sultan Baabullah of Ternate conquered and converted Buton to Islam in 1580 (Vonk cited in Southon 1995; Ligtvoet cited in Zuhdi 1999: 73; Reid 1993: 166; Yunus 1995).[35]

Between 1580 and 1667, Buton, being on the spice trade routes, was a contested domain in power struggles between Gowa and Ternate (Schoorl 1994: 19), with the VOC (Dutch East Indies Company) treating Buton as a buffer between these two polities (Fox 1995).[36] In fact Buton's weak position between the powerful Gowa and Ternate Sultanates heavily influenced its history (Zuhdi 1999). Vermeij (2000) argues that it was the Wolio Sultanate's cooperation with, and protection from, the VOC which enabled it to consolidate control over its territories in the first place.

The fourth Sultan of Buton, Dayanu Ikhsanuddin (also called 'La Elangi'),[37] signed Buton's first treaty with the VOC in 1613. In 1667, with the defeat of Goa by the VOC, Buton became independent of Ternate and Makassar, but came under increasing Dutch control. This situation continued, with the government of Hindia Belanda taking over from the VOC, and increasing its degree of control in the early twentieth century (Vermeij 2000). The Japanese occupied the area from 1942-1945.

When Indonesia won its independence in 1949, the Wolio Sultanate was in decline. Dying office-holders were not replaced, and when the 38th Sultan, La Ode Falihi, died in 1960, the Sultanate was officially ended. During the 1950s Buton was heavily affected by the Darul Islam uprising in South Sulawesi; many rebels including the leader Kahar Muzakkar fled to Southeast Sulawesi during this time. The 1960s were also a difficult time for Buton, which was considered to be a communist stronghold during the communist witch-hunting of the early New Order period. Some Butonese were killed or imprisoned. Many Butonese today claim that political marginalisation connected with this communist

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[35] Butonese people acknowledge a special relationship with Ternate; this is encoded in, amongst other things, a common adherence to the Bikusagara myth (Andaya 1993: 39).

[36] See also Andaya (1993) for a description of this period.

[37] Sultans generally had a formal, Islamic name as well as a common Butonese name preceded by 'La'. This is still common today; most villagers in Boneoge have a 'school name' (which was often Muslim-sounding) as well as an informal 'everyday name', which begins with 'La' for men and 'Wa' for women.

reputation partially explains why Buton remains politically and economically neglected within the Indonesian state.

Anthropological work on Buton includes Schoorl (1985, 1987, 1991a, 1991b, 1994, 2003), Southon (1995) and Rudyansjah (2009). There have been two recent PhD theses on Buton, on childbirth practices (Alesich 2007), and on maritime activities (Vermonden 2008). The best historical work on Buton is from Yunus (1995), Zuhdi (1999), Vermeij (2000), and Schoorl (2003). Local anthropologists have produced two master's theses on Buton, Munafi (2001) on migration, and Tenri (1998) on sailing. A summary of Butonese social and cultural life can also be found in Schoorl (2003: 1-13, 235-53). However, historical and anthropological work on Buton is still lacking, given the region's historical significance and linguistic and cultural diversity.

Linguistic work has been done on the languages of Wolio, Cia-Cia, Tukang Besi and Muna, although only Muna has a complete grammar and dictionary.[38] Dutch writers during the late colonial period contributed some historical, cultural, and linguistic work, and a number of more recent Indonesian undergraduate theses and books deal with various aspects of Butonese history and culture.[39] There are also several locally written accounts of Butonese oral history and culture and a catalogue of existing manuscripts from the Wolio Sultanate (Ikram 2001).[40]

2.2 An Oscillating Complementarity between Land and Sea

Buton's history has been characterised by a continual dependence on both maritime-based and territorial-based livelihoods, but a fluctuation back and forth over time (or oscillation) in which one is dominant. The twentieth century saw a

[38] On the Wolio language, see Abas (1983), Arief et al. (1985), Mattalitti (1985), Gani et al. (1986), Anceaux (1987, 1988), Liebner (1990), Muthalib (1993), van den Berg (2004), Lio (1998), and Sande (1998). On the Cia-cia language, see Harijati (1991) and van den Berg (1991c). On Tukang Besi see Donohue (1995). On the Muna language, see Yatim (1981, 1984), Sande (1986), van den Berg (1989, 1991a, 1991b, 1996), and van den Berg and Sidu (2000).

[39] The Dutch sources include Ligtvoet (1878), van den Bergh (1922), Couvreur (2001[1935]), Vonk (1937), and van den Berg (1937, 1939, 1940). Indonesian sources include PPPKD (1978a, 1978b), Zahari (1981, 1985), Malim and Qaimuddin (1983), Nur and Dirman (1985), Nadir (1989), Aljauhar (1990), Hadara et al. (1994), Zuhdi et al. (1996), Musria (1997), Rasyid (1998), Moersidi (n.d.) and Alihasan (n.d).

[40] Local histories include Zahari (1977), Madu (1983), Zaenu (1985) and Aegu (n.d.).

shift from a dependence on agriculture toward a dependence on sea-going livelihoods including trading. This section describes Buton's history of alternating between dependence primarily on the land and on the sea.

Buton has a long history of complementarity between agricultural and maritime lifestyles, and between farming and fishing in particular, where farmers trade surplus agricultural products for fish or for foreign goods from fishers and sea-going traders (see also Southon 1995).[41] The case in Buton is similar to what Gibson observed in South Sulawesi: 'A complementary opposition...between land and sea, agriculture and trade, with the latter term having higher wealth and status but less territorial power' (2005: 163). Both trade and agriculture are, and have been, important for the polity, but to different degrees during different periods.[42]

The shift away from agriculture and towards maritime activities in the twentieth century may be just the most recent in a long history of oscillations between these two lifestyles. This recalls Leach, who described a model of cyclical social change for highland Burma, with Kachin villages alternating between two ideal types, the *gumlao* and *gumsa*, where each was unstable and tended towards the other (Leach 1954). The agricultural and fishing/trading lifestyles in Buton do not seem to contain the seeds of their own destruction in this way, however, but rather are adaptations to changing economic and political conditions of the region.

Over the past four centuries, Buton's fluctuations between trade and agriculture were tightly connected with political stability, which affected maritime security, and with the fortunes of the spice trade. As an island polity

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[41] A Boneoge informant described how local farmers traded with outsiders in the past: 'There were two groups here. There used to be a system of barter, but those who traded were from outside the village...they would come with fish, and trade with the farmers up above [in the hills above Boneoge]. Those below [on the coast] had gardens too, but small ones, just to feed themselves. Those up above had large gardens...they had a surplus.' In this way the coastal people (during this period, roughly 1910-1970) formed a kind of intermediate group bridging both orientations (sea and land), since they both fished and farmed. During the 1970s, though, as sailing and trading brought them more opportunities in Ambon, they tended to give up agriculture.

[42] This fishing/farming dichotomy seems to be historically significant throughout Buton, and is enshrined in Butonese ritual. The fact that the fishing/farming (i.e. sea/land) dichotomy encompassed two parts of a complete whole was reflected in annual spirit-propitiation ceremonies which were carried out all over Buton at least up until the 1950s and continue to be held in some places. Complementary sets of ceremonies were held on consecutive days, one propitiating the land spirits in order to increase agricultural fertility in the coming season, and the other propitiating the sea spirits in order to increase fishing yields.

located on the trade routes to the 'spice islands' of Maluku, trade was likely to have always been important to Wolio (Zuhdi 1999: 50). Wolio emerged as a local power during the period 1570-1630, a period of rapid expansion of regional trade (ibid: 191). The first treaty between the VOC and Wolio, signed in 1613, established an alliance between the two (as well as with Ternate). The VOC was interested in the treaty as a part of its efforts to enforce its monopoly on the spice trade, while Wolio obtained the VOC's assurance that they would prevent Makassar's hostilities against Buton. This alliance enabled the Sultan of Wolio to consolidate power over his subject villages (Vermeij 2000: 79).

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Butonese polity retained an orientation to the sea. Wolio played a large role in regional trade, including 'smuggling' of spices (in other words, trade not licensed by the VOC), especially since the opening of access to Chinese markets in the late seventeenth century (ibid.: 67-8). During the first half of the eighteenth century, Buton expanded its role in regional trade, as its main rivals Ternate and Gowa had been conquered by the VOC (Schoorl 2003: 75).

The slave trade was immense during this time (Reid 1998: 144) and was particularly important for the Wolio economy (Schoorl 2003: 242). In fact Wolio had the reputation of being one of the many states which rose and flourished because of the slave trade (Reid 1983; see also Warren 2003: 3). By the mid seventeenth century 'Buton was a major raiding centre and market, and sent nothing but slaves to Makassar' (Reid 1983: 31). Buton was thus one of the 'trading and raiding polities' of the region (Velthoen 1997: 372; see also Sutherland 1983; Fox 1983), where the maritime lifestyle during this period likely included a mix of sailing, fishing, trading, smuggling, robbing, and raiding. During this period agriculture, although surely continuing, seems to have been much less important than these maritime livelihoods.

By the nineteenth century, however, the French and British had managed to plant cloves elsewhere in their own colonies, the spice trade in eastern Indonesia dried up, and the Wolio Sultanate then lacked the funds necessary to properly protect its villages from pirate attacks (Vermeij 2000: 79). During this period, the Dutch were busy in Europe with the Napoleonic wars, and unable to maintain stability in the East Indies. Attacks by raiding slavers (Butonese as well as

outsiders (Velthoen 1997: 370)) intensified at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries (Schoorl 2003: 107), and Buton was one of the hardest-hit areas.[43] Pirate attacks in the region were so frequent and feared that the people moved inland, building walled forts in the hills (Warren 2003: 10), and the coastal areas of Buton became uninhabited (Velthoen 1997: 379).[44] With mobility restricted by unsafe waters, the population was increasingly dependent on agriculture. This shift away from the maritime lifestyle had a devastating impact on livelihoods, and the effect was such that, as one Dutch commentator put it, 'we know of no place in the Indies where the poverty is so widespread and acute as on Buton' (van Schelle and Tobias cited in Schoorl 1994: 49).

An increased emphasis on agriculture was needed in order to deal with the poverty caused by the lack of trading opportunities. This shift is reflected in the 1824 treaty between the Butonese Sultanate and the Netherlands East Indies government, which described Sulawesi as being in a 'bitter state of poverty' which was to be relieved by encouraging agriculture, especially crops which could be used for trade (Vermeij 2000: 110). Shortly after this, the Dutch turned their colonial efforts towards agriculture through the 'cultivation system' (CultuurStelsel).

Later in the century, a shift back towards the sea began. The Dutch attempted to improve maritime security by using their new steam ships to eradicate piracy in eastern Indonesia; Buton was selected as a site for coal storage facilities, and another treaty in 1873 incorporated Buton as a Dutch colony partly for this purpose (Vermeij 2000: 84). In the treaty, slavery was prohibited and Buton was to assist efforts to combat piracy (ibid: 120-1).

By 1906 the Dutch colonial government had grown in strength and tightened its hold over the Wolio Sultanate; a new contract gave the former the right to interfere in internal Butonese matters (Schoorl 2003: 3). The Dutch set up new

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[43] Informants in Boneoge spoke of the feared 'Tobelo' raiders who plagued Buton in the past. It is possible that they are referring to followers of the Tidore Prince Nuku, who, fleeing the conflict between Nuku and the VOC, established a settlement in the Bay of Tolo in northern Sulawesi in the 1790s, and became feared participants in the raiding, trading, and slaving industries (Velthoen 1997: 378-9).

[44] Dozens of these forts still exist in Buton, usually several kilometres inland from existing coastal villages.

systems of administration, education, health, and economic development (ibid: 137). By this time, maritime security had been established, and after over a century of living in fear of pirate attacks many of those in hilltop settlements moved down to the coast and built houses there. In many cases the resettlement was forced by the Dutch, in order to better control the population; Pannell wrote about Maluku that 'as part of the Dutch pacification strategy around the turn of the twentieth century, the inhabitants of many of these walled cliff-top villages were moved down to beach-side locations' (2003: 22).[45]

According to Boneoge informants, it was about 1910 that the first group of Boneoge people descended from the hills to form a community on the coast. Thus began the shift back towards the sea and maritime trade for the village of Boneoge, which took place progressively over the twentieth century. Most of those who remained living in the hills moved down to the coast around 1970, when Suharto's New Order government conducted a further round of forced resettlements, in order to render the population easier to govern and 'develop'.[46]

During the sixty years between 1910 and 1970, the group which descended to the coast in 1910 became gradually more integrated into the maritime culture of Buton, while those farmers who continued to live in the hills did not make this shift. In the twentieth century, regional conditions have led to an increasing embrace of a maritime-based lifestyle, and those individuals in Boneoge who have been quick to embrace this change have proved more able to achieve wealth, status and power than those who have clung to a farming-based lifestyle. The shifts in the status system seem to correspond with, and thus reinforce, this shift towards maritime livelihoods.[47]

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[45] Reid has pointed out that most coastal areas of Indonesia were sparsely populated until the twentieth century (cited in Li 2001: 45). Bigalke (2005: 68) uses the term '*kampung* concentration' to refer to the Dutch practice of inducing scattered and remote settlements to gather at more strategic places. See also Schrauwers (2000: 48) on this practice.

[46] The quote from Pannell given in the previous paragraph continued: 'Successive national governments in the post-colonial period have continued this strategy of "pacification" through the resettlement of villages considered "isolated" (*terpencil*) or "underdeveloped" (*tertinggal*)' (2003: 22).

[47] Note that this raises the interesting question of how shifts in the status system might look if regional conditions were pushing Butonese people away from maritime livelihoods and back towards territorial ones.

2.3 The Village of Boneoge

Boneoge is a village of about 3500 people, situated along the coast of an inlet, on the island of Muna. The southern part of Muna Island, including Boneoge, was part of the Sultanate of Buton, and is now a part of Buton district.[48] The island of Muna is dry, rocky, and infertile, with no mountains and few rivers. Weather follows the west/east monsoon pattern found in the region, with the west monsoon running from November to May, and the east monsoon from May to November. Rainfall occurs mostly during the west monsoon, the main season for agriculture. In the dry season water can be obtained from water springs found in limestone caves in and near the village.

Boneoge has about 620 houses and about 850 'family heads' (*kepala keluarga*), meaning married couples, some of whom live together in a single house.[49] Most residents were originally from Boneoge, although a significant number of young people had been born in Ambon. There were only a few people from other regions, who had married and settled in Boneoge (a few Javanese, Bugis, and other Butonese). Languages in daily use in Boneoge included Ambonese Malay, Indonesian, and *bahasa* Muna, and many could speak *bahasa* Wolio but did not use it on a daily basis. The variant of *bahasa* Muna spoken in Boneoge is similar but not identical to the 'Gulamas' dialect of *bahasa* Muna (van den Berg 1996), and because of this variation locals refer to it as '*bahasa* Boneoge'.

Boneoge was a *kadié* (semi-autonomous village) under the Wolio Sultanate, and its centre was a walled fort (called the '*Liwu*') in the hills some three

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[48] Boneoge is a *kelurahan* (a village headed by a civil servant) which lies in Lakudo sub-district (*kecamatan* Lakudo), in Buton district (*kabupaten* Buton), in the province of Southeast Sulawesi (*Propinsi* Sulawesi Tenggara). The northern part of Muna island belongs to Muna district, also part of Southeast Sulawesi province.

[49] The number of houses was changing rapidly due to construction of new houses, see Chapter 5. Determining the population of Boneoge at any moment is actually very difficult, given the patterns of mobility. For instance, does one include men who work in Ambon but spend one week every three months living with their family in Boneoge? Does one include families who have been gone for three months but may return in another three? Young men who are away for an uncertain period? The Family Planning officer in Boneoge, who keeps population data, does not count those who have gone on a migration for six months or more, and gave a figure of 846 family heads. An Agricultural Census was conducted in 2003 by BPS (the Central Board of Statistics) and found fewer than 600, but my own data concurred more closely with the Family Planning data.

kilometres inland from the present site of the village.[50] At the turn of the twentieth century, Boneoge people did not all live inside the confines of the *Liwu*, but instead lived in scattered communities of several dozen households in the hills near the *Liwu*, and engaged in farming and occasional small scale fishing.[51] Over the course of the twentieth century the population moved down to the coast, building houses at the current village location. The pattern of resettlement in two main waves has led to the persistence of several identifiable sub-communities in Boneoge today. The people who now reside in One and Tampanalia, the two neighbourhoods which together form the main part of the village of Boneoge, identify with the first group, who resettled at the coast around 1910.

The second major wave of resettlement came around 1970 when the early New Order government forcibly relocated many hill villages in Buton to the coast. Members of two farming communities in the hills above Boneoge, Mawaruanu and Lawonolita, were forced to move down and join the others at the coast; some of them reacted by migrating to Ambon and not returning until 1999.[52] Those who stayed formed the new community of 'Kampung Baru' ('new village') on the outskirts of Boneoge.[53] Kampung Baru now has a population of about 500, and remains a peripheral community to Boneoge in terms of wealth, status, and power (see Chapter 7). The sixty year gap between the descent of the first group and the second has led to enduring differences between the two groups. During those sixty years, the people on the coast adopted a maritime lifestyle, sailing throughout the archipelago, fishing and trading with the monsoon. Those who stayed in the hills during this time continued farming;

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[50] Local tradition holds that during Sultanate times, there were four political centres in southern Muna: Bombonawulu, Baruta, Boneoge, and Waleale, each with a walled fort.

[51] This scattered form of settlement was suited to the low fertility of the land; farmers would live close to their fields rather than living all together and walking far out to their fields.

[52] Tactics were sometimes forceful in these resettlements. In one village in Sampolawa sub-district in Buton, the houses in the hill-top village were mysteriously burned down when the people showed reluctance to leave them. Many of the villagers migrated to Balikpapan at that point.

[53] Boneoge people often differentiate between the main part of the village and the peripheral communities of Kampung Baru and Matoka. In order to capture that sense, I will refer to the main part of the village as 'Boneoge proper'. Kampung Baru is also called 'Kapolangku', although only by people who live there; many people from Boneoge proper do not even recognise this name. Similarly, the ancestral community of Lawonolita is better known by the name 'Kampung Lama' ('old village').

some migrated to Ambon but most of those worked as farmers or labourers in Ambon rather than as traders.[54]

A second marginal community on the outskirts of Boneoge, Matoka, was only formed in 1999, after the Ambon riots caused over one thousand Boneoge migrants to return to the home village. The land at Matoka was offered to those refugees who did not have access to land for a house site. Those who built there were primarily people originally from the hill communities of Mawaruanu and Lawonolita, who had been in Ambon for 30 years and had rarely visited Boneoge during this time. Some of the younger people living at Matoka were born in Ambon and had never visited Boneoge before 1999. During my fieldwork the Matoka community consisted of about 200 people, most of who had to re-establish livelihoods after losing their houses in the Ambon riots. Matoka remains a politically and economically marginalised community somewhat detached from the rest of the village.[55] (See Map 3 on p.xix).

Residents of all of these settlements are considered 'Boneoge people'. Children born to Boneoge parents, even those born and raised elsewhere (such as in Ambon), are also considered Boneoge people. Even children with a single Boneoge parent are considered Boneoge people, whether that parent is the mother or the father.

Day to day life in Boneoge is very quiet. Some people go fishing, farm in the hills above the village, or work in wage employment, but many others are idle while in Boneoge, earning their money during migrations or living from remittances from migrants. The most commonly used fishing techniques are the dragnet (*jala*, BM: *dala*),[56] the gillnet (BM: *kafolanto*), the purse net (BM: *kafotondu*), and the fishing platform (*bagan*). In recent years some have tried

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[54] During the period after 1910, some people from the town of Baubau (where the Wolio Sultanate was based) came and settled in Boneoge. These new arrivals tended to be men who either came to fish locally or to trade with the farmers, or nobles sent from the Sultanate to administer the village. They usually married Boneoge women, raising the status of those women and their descendants through their noble blood and association with the Sultanate centre at Baubau.

[55] All of those who returned from Ambon following the 1999 riots there were classified as 'refugees' (*pengungsi*) by the government, and given financial support. Some of these people resettled in Boneoge, while others migrated to new locations. Most preferred to be referred to as 'returned migrants' rather than 'refugees', as the latter term had negative associations with poverty and powerless. Matoka people, however, continued to be known as 'refugees', perhaps because of their poverty and inferior status in Boneoge.

[56] This is the term for *jala* used by Pelras (2000: 46).

cultivating seaweed (*agar-agar*), using bamboo platforms and then (after some growth) submerged lines off the beach. A couple of people still use fish traps (BM: *bubu*) or fish bombs.

Agriculture has declined to the point where less than 10% of the village population now subsist from their gardens. The remaining farming households, almost all in Kampung Baru, mostly live from some combination of local fishing, farming, and migration. Maize (BM: *kahitela*) and cassava (BM: *mawusao*) remain the main crops; both are planted in November when the rains begin.

2.4 Fieldwork and Methodology

I spent a total of two years in the field, of which five months (July to November 2001) were spent in the district capital of Baubau, and nineteen months in the village of Boneoge (December 2001 – December 2002, May – December 2003). While in Baubau I lived with a family inside the *keraton* (W: the walled fort where the Wolio Sultanate was based), and also spent time visiting other locations in Buton. This included attending several cultural festivals in various parts of the district, especially in the region near Boneoge.

Once settled in Boneoge I was granted the use of an empty house, which I fixed up and lived in. People in Boneoge were very obliging and gracious in answering my never-ending questions, and in allowing me to participate in their lives. Much of my time was spent conducting informal interviews as I wandered the village during the day, meeting people as they worked or visiting their homes. Many people were not working, either because they were in between migrations or because they received remittances from migrants in their households, and that meant they were available for interviews. I spent evenings chatting with neighbours, paying social visits, writing field notes or chatting with patrons at the small food stall which sold meals of 'yellow rice' just outside my house.

I participated in activities such as fishing, farming, and village group labour, attended many ceremonies, and participated in village meetings and entertainment events. I got to know a wide selection of villagers, and a smaller number of key informants provided more in-depth information on particular

issues. There were five families who accepted me as a regular visitor in their households and provided much information. I made two trips up to the old village in the hills (BM: the '*Liwu*'), once with a group of villagers who also wanted to see it. I also met with Boneoge traders in the towns of Baubau and Kendari, with Boneoge migrants in Jayapura, Papua, and with Boneoge men in Jakarta who were preparing to leave to work on the Japanese fishing boats.

An effort was made to spend time in several different parts of the village, especially once I observed how different life was across the various sub-communities. I spent large amounts of time with farmers in Kampung Baru, with labourers in Matoka, with fishers in Tampanalia and with traders in One (the latter two communities comprise Boneoge proper). I got to know the elite of the village (leaders and wealthy traders) as well as many of the low status people. Interviewing women was also possible, as they often sat in the open areas under their houses during the day, cooking or weaving twine, and were generally open to approach.[57]

I studied the Wolio language while living in Baubau and achieved a working knowledge of it, and while in Boneoge I studied and used the Muna language. I conducted some interviews in Muna but the majority in Indonesian, both because I was more fluent in Indonesian (having lived in the country for three years prior to my research) and because some villagers themselves could not speak Muna (especially young people who had grown up in Ambon).

Aside from informal interviewing and participant-observation, I also used several systematic forms of data collection. With the help of a research assistant, I conducted several surveys of the entire village, to gather information on livelihoods, house types, and migration histories, and to map the village. I also conducted three sets of twenty structured interviews, designed to collect migration histories in three very different parts of the village. One set of twenty interviews was conducted in Matoka, one in Tampanalia, and one in One (near my house). These interviews provided systematic information on migration

[57] Keeping track of villager's names was often difficult. Besides the 'school name' and the everyday name (beginning with 'La' or 'Wa') mentioned above, teknonymy is widely used in Boneoge. A person could be referred to as 'mother of X' where X could be any of her children's names. If I knew someone as 'mother of X', someone else might know her as 'mother of Y' using another of her children's names. To be able to follow who was who, one needed to know all the children's names.

practices over the past decades and also revealed important variations between these groups. Finally, I copied a number of written materials on the history and culture of Buton, notably from the private collection of Al-Mujazi, the son of a former Wolio Sultanate official, who is attempting to preserve his collection of decaying manuscripts from the Sultanate, with limited funds.

CHAPTER 3
THE ERAS OF MIGRATION

Migration is an essential part of life for most Boneoge people, and has contributed greatly to the changes in the status system which are described in this thesis. Migration is so present in everyday life that recent periods are referred to by the name of the popular migration destination at that time. For instance, the 1950s and 1960s are referred to as the 'sailing era' or the 'Singapore era' (using the word '*jaman*' for 'era') when many Boneoge men sailed on wooden cargo ships to Singapore and elsewhere. The 'Ambon era' ran from about 1970 to 1999 when the Ambon riots led many Boneoge people to return to the home village. The current period is referred to as both the 'Papua era' and the 'Hawaii era'. After a description of general aspects of Boneoge migration, each of these periods is discussed in turn, providing background information for the analysis which follows in later chapters.

3.1 Boneoge Migration

Migration is a near-universal activity among Boneoge households. With its infertile land and depleted fishing stocks, Boneoge, and Buton in general, is seen as a place where it is difficult to make a living. It is said that anyone who wants more than just 'to eat' must migrate, and most people *do* desire more. Villagers estimated that 90% of village income is from migrants' remittances. Although some people do leave Boneoge for decades with their families, a more common form of migration among Boneoge people is a trip of several months or a year, with the migrant returning to Boneoge at the end of the migration. Rather than saying that such people 'have migrated', which implies a longer term move, it is more accurate to say they are 'on a migration'.

To measure the extent of mobility away from Boneoge, in 2002 I conducted a survey of all households in Boneoge.[58] The results show clearly that migration is

[58] 994 families were surveyed; 775 headed by men and 219 headed by women.

an integral part of Boneoge life; almost all men and many women migrate, many to more than one location. The main conclusions from the survey were:

- Almost all Boneoge men migrate. Fewer than 5% of married men had never migrated outside of Buton for work, and those who had not were mostly the teachers working in the village. Almost half of family heads are on a migration at any one time; at the time of the survey, only 59% of 994 family heads were actually present in Boneoge.
- Three popular destinations account for over 85% of those currently on a migration at the time of the survey: Papua (44%), Ambon (24%), and working on international fishing boats (this is referred to as 'Hawaii'[59]) (18%). Specifically for unmarried male migrants, one destination dominated: over half had worked in Hawaii.[60]
- Before the riots, Boneoge migration was overwhelmingly oriented towards Ambon. 67% of the people surveyed had worked in Ambon, and 45% of married family heads had been living in Ambon long term when the 1999 riots broke out.
- Women are also mobile. 71% of female family heads in the survey had lived elsewhere. Most of these were in Ambon before the riots; some had lived in Papua also.
- Most households financially depend on migration. Over half of households have a member on a migration at any particular time, and 92% of households have at least one person who has migrated in the past.[61] See Figures 3.1 and 3.2; Figure 3.1 presents data on how many members of each household have migrated in the past, while Figure 3.2 presents data on how many members of each household are currently on a migration.

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[59] Migrants do not actually work in Hawaii; rather, they board international fishing boats in Hawaii, and work in international waters on the boats. Since they refer to this migration as going to 'Hawaii', I follow suit here.

[60] When in Boneoge, migrants are often referred to by the location to which they normally migrate. For instance, young men who migrate to Hawaii are referred to as 'Hawaii boys' (*anak Hawaii*), and a Boneoge person who often migrates to the town of Nabire (in Papua) can be referred to as 'a Nabire person' (*orang* Nabire).

[61] Note that households tend not to be very large in Boneoge, since married couples tend to establish their own household as soon as possible after marriage. Thus, the fact that over half of households have a member on migration at any particular time means that a high proportion of the workforce migrates.

Figure 3.1 Past migrants per household

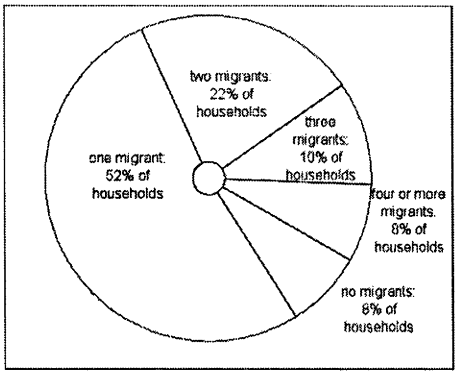
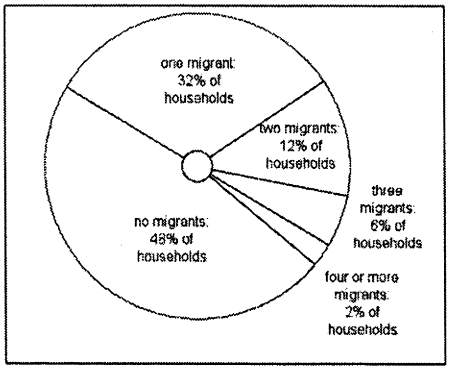


Figure 3.2 Current migrants per household



When Boneoge people speak in Indonesian about migrating, they used the words '*merantau*' (migrate), '*pergi mencari*' (to go searching)[62], or even just '*pergi*' (to go). The English 'migrate' implies a more long-term movement than does the Indonesian '*merantau*'. '*Merantau*' can refer to long-term migration but can just as easily refer to monthly trips to a neighbouring island for work, and usually implies an intention to return home in the future.[63] This thesis will use 'to go on a migration' and 'migration' with reference to the Indonesian term '*merantau*', and the term 'migrant' should be seen as referring to the Indonesian term '*perantau*' (which is derived from the same root, and means 'one who *merantau*').

In everyday speech in (the Boneoge dialect of) *bahasa* Muna, there is no direct translation for this concept of *merantau*.[64] The most common way to speak about someone on a migration, in the Muna language, is simply to say 'he went

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[62] '*Mencari*' means 'searching', but in the context of migration it means 'to seek income'; i.e. it is a shortened form of '*mencari uang*' (seeking money) or '*mencari rejeki*' (seeking good fortune). Acciaioli (1989) described Bugis migration as 'searching for good fortune' (*massapa dalle* in Bugis, *mencari rezeki* in Indonesian). This refers to a search for more than wealth; I describe more about what Boneoge people are searching for in Chapter 5.

[63] '*Merantau*' has been defined as: 'leaving one's cultural territory voluntarily, whether for a short or long time, with the aim of earning a living or seeking further knowledge or experience, normally with the intention of returning home' (Naim cited in Forbes 1981: 57).

[64] Lineton has written that Bugis lacks a good term for 'migrant', and that '*pasompe*' (sailor) is used instead' the concept of *merantau* (going on a migration) is then captured by saying '*lao sompe*' (to go sailing), which is used to refer to everything from migrating for a week, sailing, to settling in Ambon (1975a: 25-6). In Boneoge the local term for sailing was not used to refer to migration even though sailing did dominate migration during the post-World War II period. The *bahasa* Muna equivalent of *pasompe* is *bhose*, which means to 'depart, leave, sail' (van den Berg 1996: 62). *Hela* also means 'to sail', but does not have the same sense of 'to depart, leave' (van den Berg 1996: 188). Boneoge people did not use *bhose* or *hela* to refer to migration in general. Even for 'sailing', people would often say '*nokala nae boti*' (BM: he went by *lambo* boat) as opposed to *nobhose* or *nohela* (BM: he sailed), when they were speaking about the Boneoge sailing era.

to Ambon' (BM: *nokalamo tae Ambo*) or 'he works in Ambon' (BM: *nokahadhaa tae Ambo*). When pressed to give an equivalent for the Indonesian *merantau*, informants gave *nokala no'ulei nae koliwuno* (BM), a mouthful which literally means 'he goes searching abroad' (*dia pergi mencari di negeri orang* in Indonesian).[65] The root form *'ulei* (BM) is actually close in meaning to 'searching for money' (*mencari uang*) or 'working', and only refers to migration when the rest of the phrase 'abroad' is added.[66]

Part of the motivation to migrate is economic; it is hard to make a living in Buton. But (especially young) migrants aspire to achieve not merely an income, but success, or more accurately, *sukses* – a Boneoge concept of success in life which encompasses social as well as economic achievements (and which is described in Chapter 5). Migrating also provides young men with relief from the enclosed arena of the home village, where they find their low status a burden, where their behaviour is under close scrutiny, where those who are not on a migration can be perceived as lazy, and where the likelihood of obtaining a desired marriage partner depends upon their reputation and earning potential. Parents encourage their children to go on migrations, often helping them by selecting a location where an uncle or aunt will assist the young migrant.

Migration is not just for the young. Many middle-aged people have spent their whole adult lives away from Boneoge, or continue to go on regular migrations. Women also go on migrations. Young women travel to various *rantau* (migration locations) to work, or just to visit relatives. During the sailing era women tended to be sedentary while the men were mobile, but in the 1970s many women had their first migration experience accompanying their husbands to Ambon to live.

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[65] '*No*' is the third person singular inflection in *bahasa* Muna, and *kala* is 'to go'. *'Ulei* is the root of the inflected form *no'ulei.*

[66] The notion that *'ulei* means 'searching for money' is strengthened by the fact that the noun form *kaka'uleino* (BM) means 'earnings' or 'the results of his search' (*hasil pencariannya*). An informant translated the Indonesian word *merantau* into the *bahasa* Muna '*nomansari*', which is a loan word from the Indonesian *mencari* – indicating again that the concept of migrating is equated with 'going to search'. In *bahasa* Muna, 'he searches for' is *ne'ondo*, in the sense of 'he is looking for something'. The phrase *ne'ondo doi* (BM) means 'he searches for money' (*dia mencari uang*) in the sense of 'working to earn money'. This 'search for money' can be undertaken locally or far away, but this is less of a distinction than that in English between 'working' and 'migrating'. Similarly, when I asked for *bahasa* Muna equivalents of 'migrant' and 'migration location' (*rantau*), I was given *'umuleino* (BM) and *ka'uleia* (BM) respectively, but again, these were not frequently used; literally they mean 'one who searches for money' and 'place of searching for money'.

Some women now migrate in their own right, for instance trading clothes in Papua, either together with, or in the absence of, a husband.[67]

The consistency with which many Boneoge people migrate throughout their lives sets them apart from many other Indonesian ethnic groups such as the Minangkabau for which *merantau* has been described as a rite of passage for young men (see Naim 1976, 1979; Murad 1980; and Pelly 1983, 1994). Similarly, Toba Batak migration, or *mangaranto*, has also been described as being undertaken in order to 'gain experience worthy of an adult male' (Rodenburg 1997: 45). The dynamic nature of Boneoge migration, where the migration experiences of one generation are very different from those of the previous one, contrasts with Minangkabau migration, which according to Forbes, 'remained more or less constant' from 1900 to 1970 (Forbes 1981: 61).

The search for status has been described as an important part of migration for several Indonesian ethnic groups. Pelly (cited in Munafi 2001) describes Batak migration as motivated by the desire to 'be number one', hinting at status goals. Rodenburg describes the migration of several groups (such as Dayak, Acehnese, Iban, Bawean, and Minang) as oriented towards a 'men's journey', for 'material gain and social prestige' (1997: 46). Most importantly, status considerations are essential in migration among the Bugis of South Sulawesi (Lineton 1975a). Similarities between Bugis and Butonese migration styles in fact go far beyond this.

The pattern of Butonese migration over the past few centuries has been characterised by a flexible combination of sailing, fishing, farming, and trading. These different endeavours are mutually supportive: sailing traders fish to augment their incomes, fishermen transport and trade their maritime products, sailors learn of lucrative fishing locations and settle there (or offer transport to others who wish to settle), and mobile traders sometimes continue trading after settling somewhere. This approach to migration has been taken by Butonese in

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[67] Women's mobility, though, does depend on their place in the life cycle, as Chant found for women in Costa Rica (1992: 69). In Boneoge, single women are often permitted to travel by their parents, younger married women are usually denied permission by their husbands, and older women are usually allowed to travel to visit children. Women also play important roles in migration even if they remain in Boneoge – for example in maintaining the kin-based networks of reciprocity which assist in men's migrations, as Chant also found (ibid: 67).

Kalimantan, Maluku, Papua, and Nusa Tenggara. This flexible and dynamic style of niche-filling migration is similar to Bugis migration as described by a number of researchers (Lineton 1975b; Acciaioli 1989; Robinson 2002; Pelras 1998). Such mobility brings knowledge of underexploited niches, which the Bugis have enjoyed over at least the last three centuries, engaging in 'firstly, small-scale interisland seaborne trade and, secondly, pioneer settlement and development of unpopulated or sparsely peopled regions' (Lineton 1975a: 9). Butonese, also, established pioneer settlements in many parts of eastern Indonesia, and they, like the Bugis, tended to be oriented towards fishing, farming, or trade (see Lineton 1975b: 179-80). The similarity in migration patterns (and locations) of peoples from Sulawesi has led to the coining of the term 'BBM' to refer to Bugis, Butonese, and Makassarese migrants, usually in eastern Indonesia.

This pattern of mobility is not well captured by the term 'migration' – as has been pointed out with regard to Bugis 'migration'. Before 1669, Lineton explains, Bugis traders 'were – and most traders still are – nomads rather than migrants, roaming the archipelago in search of trade in accordance with the direction of the prevailing monsoon, returning to Sulawesi for only a few months of each year to refit and repair their praus' (1975a: 13). This description also fits the recent sailing era in Boneoge (the 1950s and 1960s). Neither is the current Boneoge pattern of working in Hawaii well captured by the term 'migration': two-year contracts spent on international fishing boats, where long periods on the ships are interspersed by brief port visits in foreign countries.[68] Migration researchers have established a host of more specific terms to refer to these different styles; Boneoge migrants engage in a whole range of these different sub-types of migration.[69]

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[68] Borovnik has used the concept of 'emporion' to capture this maritime space and lifestyle; an emporion, different to a land-based diaspora, is a 'dynamic network of national and migrant communities', and migration is a ''voyage' within this network' (2005: 135).

[69] Terminological distinctions from the migration literature can be useful in preventing the collapsing of vastly different experiences into the monolithic category of 'migration'. The variety of Boneoge migration styles includes what has been called *seasonal migration* (migrating to Ambon but coming back for the harvest), *oscillating migration* (Boneoge men going back and forth to Ambon for several months at a time), *circular migration* (going to Ambon or Papua for several years and then moving back to Boneoge), *chain migration* (being invited to join family in a migration location), *transilient migration* (moving to one location, but then migrating on to another location from there – as Boneoge migrants who go to Ambon and then to Papua), *ancestral return migration* (returning to a location from which one's ancestors originally migrated, such as second generation migrants to Ambon returning to Boneoge) and *return*

The ideology of Bugis migration also bears many important similarities with that of Butonese migration. Generally researchers agree that the Bugis strive for status through migration, that they are adaptive and entrepreneurial, revere pioneers (Davis 1976), find economic niches, are not afraid to work hard, and use kin and ethnic connections to construct patron-client networks.[70] They look at the migration experience as one of suffering in order to advance one's position.[71] All of these characteristics hold for Boneoge migration as well.

But there are also important differences between Bugis migration and that of Boneoge people. In particular, the Butonese do not have the same reputation for aggressive domination as do Bugis migrants (see Lineton 1975a: 203).[72] During the 1980s, Aditjondro wrote about how (mainly Bugis) migrants had 'socially and economically conquered local peoples in Irian Jaya' (Aditjondro cited in Tirtosudarmo 2000: 186), while Acciaioli described how consecutive waves of Bugis migration to the Lake Lindu region of Central Sulawesi achieved the political, economic and religious domination of the region (Acciaioli 1989). Butonese migrants often explicitly distinguished themselves from the Bugis, and criticised this Bugis style of migration which they saw as causing conflicts in the *rantau.*

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migrants (who came back from Ambon in 1999 after decades of living there) (terms come from Chant and Radcliffe (1992: 10-13) and King et al. (1983)).

[70] Specifically, Robinson describes the important characteristics of Bugis migration as the importance of status considerations, a cognatic kinship system, entrepreneurialism, the desire to go on the *hajj* pilgrimage (many times if possible), innovation and adaptability, networks of patronage, tightly knit social groups in the migration location, and allegiance to place of origin or a particular leader (Robinson 2002: 155-6).

Acciaioli described the 'themes and strategies' of Bugis migration as '...status, achievement of material success and its signs, reliance on kin in recruitment and settlement, the continuation of subethnic loyalties, complementarity in resource exploitation, and the construction of leader-follower hierarchies' (Acciaioli 1989: 324).

Pelras has argued that Bugis migrants possess a series of 'modern' characteristics which have enabled them to succeed, such as technological innovation, orientation towards exchange and the market economy, the primacy of the individual over the community, and the adoption of worldwide systems of thought (such as Islam) (Pelras 1998). These characteristics are particularly suited to migrants, who have to deal with new economic, social, and religious environments when they travel.

[71] 'From the point of view of the people of Sulawesi, migration is about sacrifice, struggle and suffering in the quest to better oneself through improving one's material circumstances' (Robinson 2002: 153).

[72] The Bugis have the reputation of being restless and aggressive in their migrations (Lineton 1975a: 203).

Boneoge is an example of what Hildred Geertz called a centrifugal society, which 'spins off its members away from their own valleys and islands, temporarily or permanently, into the outer world, where they restlessly strive after new wisdom or wealth' (cited in Lineton 1975a: 11). For such societies, understanding the decision to migrate requires more than a 'push-pull' analysis of economic and political factors (Munafi 2001: 52-7); because of their tendency to be mobile, the more appropriate question might be why someone does not migrate as opposed to why someone does (Petersen 1958). In Boneoge, migration is a way of life to the extent that the non-migrant stands out as different.[73] That is, there needs to be attention to non-economic factors propelling migration, such as religious or cultural motivations (see Munafi 2001).

One important legacy of centuries of Butonese migration is scattered networks of Butonese villages throughout eastern Indonesia which continue to exploit marine resources.[74] These networked coastal villages, along with other coastal communities of Bugis and Bajau peoples, have for 300 years exploited marine resources in eastern Indonesia (Fox 2000: 353). Although the BBM acronym leaves out the Bajau ethnic group (perhaps because the Bajau are not as important to urban dynamics between migrants and 'locals'), Bajau migrations are often entwined with those of Bugis and Butonese people who exploit maritime resources, and villagers are often of mixed ethnicity between these groups (ibid.: 350).[75]

Networks of Butonese migrants have also grown up in urban areas, where they act as a powerful resource for new migrants. The most important nodes in Boneoge migration networks are not fishing villages and farming settlements but urban trader enclaves, which grew up in Ambon, in Dili (before 1999), and in many of the small towns in Papua (mostly post-1999). The Bugis also have

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[73] This calls to mind Miyazaki's point that the current conceptual frame of nations as bounded, with sedentary populations, gives rise to an understanding of 'migration' (2000: 11) as a radical departure from expected sedentarism (see also Malkki 1997).

[74] Fox has written about these maritime networks, with villages in such places as Buru, Banda, Alor, Flores, Roti, Ambon, Seram, and Dobo (Fox 2000: 350), connected by ties of kinship and, in some cases, polygamous marriage (Fox and Reid 1992). On these networks, see also Fox (1995, 1996, 1998).

[75] The Bajau are renowned for their sea-based nomadism (see Nimmo 1972; Sather 1971, 1997; Warren 1977).

networks of traders, fishers, and farmers in many locations in eastern Indonesia (see Lineton 1975b: 173) and Butonese migrants often attach themselves to Bugis enclaves given the superior numbers of the Bugis. In Ambon, however, according to the 1990 census, it was Butonese who outnumbered Bugis by more than two to one (using the 'province of origin' data to estimate ethnic origin) (Fox 2000: 352).[76]

Butonese enclaves in urban eastern Indonesia, while known to fill such low status niches as labouring and pedicab driving, are also focused towards trading and control of markets – as is the case for BBM migrants in general. Their success at these endeavours has led to a rising resentment on the part of local populations,[77] described by Tirtosudarmo shortly before the fall of the Suharto government:

> [The BBM] are well known seafarers and traders and have successfully developed their social and economic networks in major urban areas in eastern Indonesia. In eastern Indonesia...division of labour by ethnic group is somewhat typical....the lower levels are dominated by the Makasarese, Buginese, and Butonese....The feelings of resentment among the local population towards the domination of migrants in both governmental and private occupations were very obvious and easily perceived (Tirtosudarmo 1997: 314-5).

The politically volatile period shortly before and for some years after the fall of the Suharto government in 1998 saw a series of conflicts erupt in eastern Indonesia; tensions between migrants and locals were an important part of many of these conflicts. Such outbreaks led to flows of return migrants, such as flows of BBM migrants leaving East Timor in 1996 and 1998 (Tirtosudarmo 2000: 189), Kupang in November 1998 (Robinson 2002: 145), Poso in early 1999

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[76] The importance of migration networks has been recognised in the literature. Kearney's concept of an articulatory migration network (AMN) includes the sending village as well as the 'daughter communities' which migrants have formed. The AMN, he explains, subsumes the level of the individual, household, community, and region, and the interactions between these levels. Articulation, in a second sense, refers to articulation between the economic, social, and cultural aspects of the network (Kearney 1996: 398).

[77] This resentment might stem in part from the tendency of BBM migrants to form enclaves in these towns, but the reverse is also true: the enclaves themselves are partially responses to hostility from the local population (see Werbner 1987: 230). Bookman has also argued that ethnic-specific migration patterns themselves follow from a high level of interethnic competition (2002: x); that is, the occupational specialisations and nepotistic practices of particular ethnic groups grow out of a situation of intense interethnic competition. These enclaves often then become symbols of an intrusive and dominating style of migration.

(Aragon 2002),[78] Ambon in 1999-2000,[79] and Papua following the Wamena anti-migrant riots of October 2000. These conflicts and the resulting sense of vulnerability have led to changes in Boneoge migration networks (see Chapter 6). However, flexible networks of BBM migrants have taken advantage of political instability for years; they are often quick to enter new regions after political instability in order to take advantage of an economic niche there, such as when the BBM entered East Timor in the late 1970s to take over the Chinese-Portuguese role in the business sector (Tirtosudarmo 2000: 186).[80]

The foregoing discussion has introduced Boneoge migration and situated it amongst relevant regional comparisons. However a better understanding of the dynamic and flexible nature of Boneoge migration can be conveyed through a more detailed era-by-era description of Boneoge migration. The remainder of this chapter provides such a description, built from 'personal migration histories' of informants in Boneoge, and focusing on the three recent 'eras' of migration: the sailing era, the Ambon era, and the present, which is referred to both as the Papua era and the Hawaii era.

3.2 The Sailing Era: From Singapore to Papua

'Nobody was left in the village...only the elderly' – Boneoge sailor

Sailing has likely been important to Buton throughout its history (Schoorl 2003: 107). However, Lineton mentions that the role of people of South Sulawesi in trading was minor until the seventeenth century (Lineton 1975a: 12), and this is likely to be the case for the Butonese as well. In the seventeenth century, the Butonese built many boats and many people migrated to Maluku (Schoorl 2003: 67). The importance of trading waxed and waned along with changing regional conditions, as was described in the previous chapter. Note, however, that even

[78] For more on how the Poso conflict relates to migration and ethnicity, see Acciaioli (2001) and Aragon (2001).

[79] In the Ambon conflict of 1999, tensions between locals and migrants from Sulawesi were identified as a major factor in the conflict (Human Rights Watch 1999: 7).

[80] The presence of economic migrant traders along with the military often makes the locals feel colonised (Tirtosudarmo 2000: 190).

when Butonese people were heavily involved in maritime activities, not all parts of Buton participated equally.[81]

My oldest informants told me that their parents were not sailors, indicating that sailing was rare when the people lived up in the hills in the early part of the twentieth century, although in the more distant past their ancestors may well have sailed. In Boneoge the first wave of resettlement down to the coast took place around 1910. The Dutch pacification of the outer islands of Indonesia, which controlled the threat from raiding and pirates and thus enabled this descent, also led to increased safety in inter island trade. Boneoge people living on the coast came into closer contact with, and increasingly engaged in, the Butonese maritime culture, and eventually began sailing on wooden '*lambo*' ships. Men from Boneoge proper sailed extensively throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the height of Boneoge's sailing era.[82] Sailing then declined during the 1970s and had almost ceased by the 1980s. The Boneoge sailing era, then, conformed roughly to the golden era of *perahu* trading in the archipelago as described by Dick (1975a, 1975b, 1986, 1987) and others (see Southon 1995: 43-9; Fox 2000; Horridge 1979).

Not all Boneoge people, however, took part in sailing. Those remaining in the hilltop settlements continued to farm and fish locally. The people of Lowonolita (also called Kampung Lama) and Mawaruanu, for instance, who lived in the hills until about 1970, did not participate in the sailing era, although they did eventually migrate to Ambon (see next section).

The sailing era in Boneoge, and for the Butonese as a whole (in the twentieth century), is indelibly associated with a single type of ship: the *perahu lambo*. These are wooden sailing ships of 10-40 tons with a length of up to 40 feet (Horridge cited in Southon 1995: 39), with a crew of 6-8 (although this was

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[81] Southon gives a table showing *perahu* ownership by subdistricts (1995: 16), which he then uses to divide these subdistricts into 'sailing' and 'non-sailing' ones (ibid.: 48). Lakudo, the subdistrict in which Boneoge lies, is classified as a 'non-sailing' subdistrict, although this merely seems to reflect the fact that Boneoge people had largely stopped sailing by the mid-1980s when Southon's data were compiled. It is not the case that sailing was the occupation at the centre of the Sultanate while the periphery was occupied with gardening; Fox notes that the Tukang Besi islands, the far eastern part of Buton, have played a large role in the maritime expansion of Butonese people (Fox 2000: 350).

[82] As explained in Chapter 2, 'Boneoge proper' refers to the hamlets of Tampanalia and One, and excludes the peripheral settlements of Kampung Baru and Matoka.

reduced to 3-4 after they were ketch-rigged in the 1960s) (Southon 1995: 43). The *lambo* is referred to as *perahu bot* in Ambon (Horridge 1979: 9) and *boti* in *bahasa* Muna. In 1979 Horridge called the *lambo* the 'ubiquitous small trading vessel of Eastern Indonesia' (1979: 36), and added that 'the lambo is the vehicle for the spread of Butung people over water to form small trading and boatbuilding colonies in many widespread places in Indonesia' (ibid.: iv).[83]

Men from Boneoge began to get experience by working as crew on the *perahu lambo* of people from other parts of Buton such as Wanci (in the Tukang Besi Islands) and Sampolawa. Ships sailed all over the archipelago, but the most lucrative (and dangerous) destination was Singapore.[84] Sailing became the primary income-seeking activity for men of Boneoge proper in the 1950s. Although many Boneoge captains sailed in ships that were owned by people from other villages, one village leader was able to list 31 *perahu* which were owned in Boneoge, with five being the most possessed by any one person. By the time many people owned *perahu lambo* in Boneoge, sailing had become so standard that almost every man who lived in Boneoge proper between 1950 and 1975 was a sailor. As one of these sailors put it, 'nobody was left in the village, only the elderly. There were hundreds of boats in Boneoge, *perahu lambo* and *sope-sope*.'[85]

When older Boneoge men speak about the sailing era, there is a sense that it was the golden age of Boneoge migration, an era of high adventure now long gone. Older men consider their sailing years as a sign of courage (since men had to be brave in order to undertake long voyages in small *lambo*), knowledge (of locations throughout Indonesia and beyond, and of how to trade), and power (having the magical and scientific knowledge necessary to be successful at such

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[83] Horridge describes the form of the *perahu lambo*, and its advantages: 'The lambo is an Indonesian version of a western small trading sloop or cutter of the nineteenth century. It was brought into use as a trader and was never a fishing boat....the rig is handy, the rig and hull design give reasonable independence from the constant directions of the monsoon winds, and the design of the stern is suited for docking' (1979: iv). This meant that the *lambo* could be sailed with a small crew, dock easily in small ports, and sail against the direction of the monsoon. The size of the *lambo* makes it more profitable as a 'trading *perahu*' than as a 'carrying *perahu*' – i.e. the sailors must own their own cargoes in order to make a profit (Dick 1975a: 99).

[84] According to the literature, Butonese *perahu* were sailing to Singapore since at least the 1870s (Ligtvoet cited in Schoorl 2003: 108), and probably earlier, since the Bugis community in Singapore was established in the 1820s (Lindblad 2002: 89). Boneoge people, however, told me that people from the village had gone to Singapore only rarely before World War II.

[85] The *sope-sope* (W) is a smaller sailboat than the *lambo*.

voyages). Sailing represents something of an ideal of Boneoge migration, where brave and knowledgeable leaders took crew out into the unknown, faced danger, and returned with wealth.[86] Some captains (*nakoda*) became wealthy, and there are stories of sacks of cash lying around the village during those days, although no effects of this wealth were evident a generation later. The captains became men of high status, revered for their *ilmu* (power/knowledge/magic)[87] and their *sukses*.[88] Today one can refer to someone as a 'captain' in order to indicate that they are in a respected position of power over others, usually in an economic enterprise.

The common sailing cycle was to go to Singapore around August or September, at the end of the east monsoon, and return to Boneoge in December or January with the west monsoon.[89] After some months in Boneoge, they might then continue to Maluku or Papua (previously called Irian Jaya), and obtain cargoes there. Purchasing cargoes in the west (Singapore, Surabaya) was easy, whereas finding cargoes in the east sometimes required significant effort. The two most commonly mentioned cargoes from the east were copra (from Seram) or dried fish (from Kaimana, Papua).[90] To obtain cargoes of fish, the men on the *lambo* would fish for several months in Kaimana, using a *bagan* (stationary fishing platform) which they would either build at Kaimana or bring in pieces with them from Boneoge.[91] The catch, of *wawokia* (BM: sprats, *ikan teri*), would be dried, and then transported to Surabaya or Banyuwangi at the end of the east

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[86] Similarly, Lineton describes the 'prau-traders' as 'the archetypal figure of the pasompe [migrant] in the 'heroic age' of Bugis trade and travel, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' (1975a: 26).

[87] '*Ilmu*' carries meanings of 'knowledge', 'science', 'mystical power', and 'magic', as well as others (Echols and Shadily 1989). Because of these shades of meaning, I often use the Indonesian term instead of translating it.

[88] Southon has explored connections between spiritual and political power surrounding the *perahu* captains and ritual experts (1995: 129-38).

[89] In Buton the winds are from the east from May to October and from the west for the other half of the year.

[90] As Lineton wrote of Bugis sailing, 'Bugis traders fitted into the interstices in European trade, collecting small quantities of goods from numerous insignificant and barely accessible ports of call and dealing in commodities, such as trepang – a Chinese delicacy – which Europeans shunned' (Lineton 1975a: 18).

[91] Boneoge sailors told me that they learned *bagan* work from the Bugis, who first brought it to Papua.

monsoon for sale. In Surabaya they might buy rice for the return journey, which would then be sold in Boneoge and the surrounding islands of Buton.[92]

During the time sailors spent in Boneoge, they engaged in local fishing, using fishing lines, *jala* (dragnets), or *bubu* (BM: fish traps). They also helped with gardening tasks, especially harvesting, since the cycle of sailing voyages often enabled the men to be home for the maize harvest. Eventually it became possible to sail against the wind (likely due to modified rigging), enabling year-round sailing.[93]

Using the *perahu lambo* to convey passengers became especially popular in the 1970s as the sailing era wound down and political stability enabled many Butonese people to migrate. Flows of Butonese people to Maluku and Kalimantan were substantial in these years, and in the years before the national shipping line (PELNI) offered regular services, *lambo* filled the niche. Boneoge ships transported people from the western side of Muna Island to Balikpapan, East Kalimantan. The crew would then purchase kerosene in Balikpapan and take it to Palu in Central Sulawesi, load another group of passengers and head back to Balikpapan. Boneoge people often travelled as passengers on Boneoge ships, but their destination was almost universally Ambon.

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[92] There were fixed methods of splitting the profits of a sailing journey between the boat owner, the crew, and the owner of the capital (which is likely one of the former two parties). In Bugis sailing voyages, the profit was split evenly between owner and crew, with the owner then giving the captain a bonus of 10-20% of the owner's portion (Dick 1975b: 88). In Boneoge, the split favoured the owner: two shares of the profit went to the owner, and one share to the crew (including the captain). According to Dick (1975a: 99), for *perahu lambo* (which tend to carry under $50m^3$ of cargo), carrying and trading one's own cargo was more profitable than carrying as a cargo vessel. In Boneoge, captains would seek out people with capital to come as crew on the voyage. If a sailor could not contribute to the capital for the voyage, he could still travel 'as crew', getting a percentage of the profit. I was told that the method of splitting profits in Boneoge was as follows. Those who supplied the capital receive their investment back, plus 75% of the profits made on that investment. The other 25% is split among the boat owner and crew as mentioned above: 2/3 for the boat owner and 1/3 for the crew, including the captain. The captain then gets a bonus from the boat owner which might be 10% of the owner's share, but depends on their agreement before the voyage. Southon describes several methods for dividing profits from a voyage, depending on whether the boat owner receives a portion of the cost of the cargo, or whether he only receives a portion of the profit (1995: 67-9). In both cases, the boat-owner receives relatively little compared to the crew. Southon also explains that a method of dividing profits which was more beneficial to the owner of capital was in use in the 1960s, when capital was harder to obtain (ibid.: 69).

[93] To return from Singapore during the east monsoon, crews used a technique they called *opal*. This meant crisscrossing the Java Sea in order to avoid facing directly into the wind, eventually getting to Flores and then crossing north to Buton. This journey would take two weeks. In times of unfavourable winds, sailors sometimes used their *perahu* to sell goods (such as sugar, rice, household utensils, etc.) between the local islands.

While the men were away sailing for most of the year, the women would engage in both subsistence and income-generating activities, in order to keep the garden running and the family eating until the husband's return. Some women engaged in petty trade within the village, or went to weekly markets in neighbouring villages. But in general the women were based near the home and garden. The gardens, run primarily by the women, provided subsistence while the men were away, and their house-based activities (making *pundoli* (BM) twine (from lontar fronds) or weaving sarongs)[94] provided a meagre income which could sustain them in case the man's sailing voyage was unsuccessful. Sailing voyages could bring substantial returns, but they could also result in losses. Price fluctuations or unwise trading might wipe out the profit from a voyage, and there were also much greater dangers; occasionally ships sank, and dozens of Boneoge men never returned. Many women fed their families through their own labour.

During the sailing age, then, men of Boneoge proper were mobile while women were stationary. The men were primarily sailors, fishers and traders, while the women were primarily farmers. Women's work could thus be characterised as low risk, labour intensive, steady earning, and home- and garden- based; whereas men's work could be characterised as high risk, less labour intensive, having highly fluctuating profits, and highly mobile. This model of male labour continued to characterize many Boneoge men's entrepreneurial experiences in later decades of migrations to Ambon.

The 1950s and 1960s were the golden age of Boneoge sailing, and sailing was in decline from the early 1970s (in Boneoge); by 1980 there were only a few *perahu lambo* still in operation, mostly used to take passengers to Ambon. In 2002 only small fishing *perahu* could be seen on the Boneoge beachfront, except for two *sope-sope* boats, with engines, which were used for trade to nearby islands. Although the decline of sailing was more rapid in Boneoge than it was in

[94] Although agriculture has declined, weaving sarongs and making *pundoli* twine are still common activities in Boneoge, primarily amongst older women. Many women work virtually all day seven days a week at these pursuits.

some other parts of Buton, in general the decline in Boneoge sailing reflected the decline in *perahu* sailing throughout the archipelago.[95]

Political stability brought about during the New Order period enabled larger (motorised) ships to operate safely, which made it more difficult for the sailing *perahu* to find cargoes. This led to reduced profits, which led crew to look for other migration opportunities. At the same time, economic growth led to urbanisation in eastern Indonesia as rural people migrated to the cities to obtain increasingly available jobs. Some sailing ships were outfitted with motors during the 1970s in attempt to modernize and stay afloat, but *perahu lambo* were not suitable for the addition of motors; the necessary structural modifications were prohibitively expensive (Horridge 1979). Furthermore, in the Boneoge context, many captains borrowed rather than owned the boats, so any decision to motorise was out of their hands.

The 1970s was a new period of peace and political stability in the region. After World War II, the 1950s and 1960s were politically turbulent with several regional rebellions and the violence which surrounded Suharto's assumption of power as the nation's second president. Safety was increased in the eastern archipelago following the defeat of the *Darul Islam / Tentara Islam Indonesia* (DI/TII) rebellion (its leader Kahar Muzakkar had fled to Southeast Sulawesi and was killed there in the mid 1960s) and the *Republik Maluku Selatan* (Republic of South Maluku) rebellion in the 1960s. Although the DI/TII rebellion itself did cause some people to leave Sulawesi and migrate to Ambon (see McNicoll 1968: 47), the safety associated with the end of this rebellion enabled an increase in traffic between Boneoge and Ambon, and encouraged women and children to make the journey as well.

Informants described living in Boneoge in the late 1960s and early 1970s as unpleasant for a number of reasons. First, there was a severe (nationwide) drought in 1971-1972 which led to a food shortage in Boneoge. People resorted to eating *kolope* (BM), an edible root which must be arduously processed before eating, since crops of maize and cassava failed. Second, Buton suffered politically from being labelled a communist stronghold. A Bugis military officer

[95] People from Sampolawa (where Southon did his research) and island areas such as Telaga, Wanci, Kadatua, and Batu Atas continued to sail after Boneoge people had ceased.

was installed as village head of Boneoge in 1971, and governed in a strict style which residents found unpleasant. This village head began a program of moving the houses of the village into rows, as well as other initiatives which required coerced community labour. Only shortly before this, the farming communities of Mawaruanu and Lawonolita had been forced to resettle at the coast. The threat of being labelled a communist was used during this period to prevent farmers from carrying out some of their harvest and fertility rituals (indigenous religious beliefs were deemed backwards and primitive throughout the archipelago at this time). All of these factors motivated Boneoge people to go on migrations away from the village during this period.

The economy of Ambon in the early 1970s was full of opportunities. Several large Japanese fishing companies established themselves in Ambon in the early 1970s, including PT Tofiko, which would come to play a large role in Boneoge migration. People could go to Ambon and work in the market selling fish, or as vendors or porters, and make more money than by working as sailing crew. The safety of Ambon and ease of transportation allowed people to bring their families with them, which increased the desirability of this migration compared to sailing.

By the early 1970s, then, the burgeoning economy of Ambon combined with unpleasant conditions in Buton to produce a mass exodus from Boneoge to Ambon. Ambon had become their 'place of searching' where almost all young people would go to find work. The money they could earn sailing as crew could not compete with what they could earn on land in Ambon.[96] The consequence of increased migration to Ambon was that Boneoge captains began to have difficulties finding crew for sailing expeditions by the early 1970s. Sailing had also become less desirable as the authorities in Buton had become more active in catching ships returning from Singapore and charging them with smuggling.

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[96] If labour was being undervalued in Boneoge, perhaps capital was being overvalued. Near the end of the sailing era, the 2:1 split of profits (two shares for boat owner, one for crew) was felt by sailors to be unfair. The 2:1 split reflected the scarcity of capital in Boneoge, since the boat owner would get such a large percentage of the profits. Dick (1975a: 88) mentions the split varying between Bugis (1:1), Makassarese and Mandarese (1:2), and Madurese (3:1), perhaps partly reflecting differential scarcity of capital. In Boneoge, at the end of the sailing era, the difficulty in finding crew altered the bargaining position of crew with respect to owners, and this resulted in a change in the method of splitting profit: the formula was altered to become an even split. However, this was not enough to significantly slow the decline of sailing.

Young men thus increasingly chose to go to Ambon rather than to sail. As one captain explained:

> At the end of the Singapore era, the way of dividing was no longer appropriate. It felt as if labour was not being valued enough. So people went to Ambon, and sold fish, or became labourers. It wasn't worth sailing; they could earn more in Ambon.

Another Boneoge captain put it like this: 'the end of the sailing era occurred because crew had learned how to migrate, they could go on migrations to Ambon, or Irian, and their earnings were better there.' To the extent that sailing enabled young men to gain valuable knowledge and experience of travel, then, the sailing lifestyle sowed the seeds of its own destruction, since it allowed men to take advantage of (what they saw as) better opportunities and leave sailing behind.[97] They had found a new niche, more lucrative and more pleasant. The Ambon age had begun.

3.3 The Ambon Era: Fish Traders and Family Migrations

Butonese migration to Ambon did not begin in the 1970s with the Ambon era in Boneoge; rather, Butonese migration to Ambon (including both mobile sea-based lifestyles as well as settlement) has a centuries-long history (Kristanto et al. 1989: 579). Buton's location on the trade routes between western Indonesia and the Spice Islands ensured that it was involved in the spice trade, which it has been suggested, may have been in existence for 2000 years (Fox 2000: 343), so it is likely that people from the Buton region have been involved in it for many centuries, either as labourers in Maluku, or as sailing traders.[98] The outlawing of

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[97] As the sailing era declined, some of Boneoge's *perahu lambo* were sold, while others decayed and were eventually dismantled for wood.

[98] The Muna language itself has a built-in orientation towards Ambon. The preposition *tae* in Boneoge (*te* in Standard Muna) is used to indicate places which are higher, to the east, or in front of a previously established point of orientation, or in an important position (see van den Berg 1989: 137-9), whereas *wae* (*we* in Standard Muna) is used for those places which are to the west, or behind. Buton is, as it were, facing towards Ambon (which lies east of Buton). One says *akumala tae Ambon* (I am going to Ambon) but *akumala wae Jawa* (I am going to Java). That this classification feels natural to Muna speakers was demonstrated in the following exchange I had with an informant:

BP: Why do we use *wae* for Malaysia and Jawa, but *tae* for Ambon and Irian Jaya?
Informant: Because Malaysia is down there! (*karena Malaysia ada di bawah*, pointing to the West)...and Ambon is up there! (*dan Ambon ada di atas*, pointing to the East).

the slave trade in the 1870s caused a labour shortage in the Banda Islands of Maluku, and this led to a period of intense migration from Binongko, a small island in the Tukang Besi chain of Buton (Zuhdi et al. 1996: 128). Butonese also came to the Ambon region in the nineteenth century to fish, and formed new coastal villages (Horridge 1986: 37).

By 1930 the ethnic Butonese in Ambon made up about 10% of the population of 107,000 and were the major immigrant group in Ambon at the time; many were from Binongko and had come during the last few decades in the nineteenth century (Chauvel 1990: 3). The Butonese established swidden fields in the hills behind the coastal villages of the Ambonese (Ouwerling cited in Chauvel 1990), using the land of Christians as well as Muslims (Chauvel 1990; see also van Klinken 2001); they themselves were not allowed to own agricultural land in Ambon (Benda-Beckmann 1996). They worked as food producers and as urban labourers; being less educated than the Ambonese, they would take jobs that the Ambonese considered beneath them (Meyer and Hardjodimedjo 1989). The Butonese did not participate in, or have much influence on, the politics of the region (Chauvel 1990). There was, however, some intermarriage between Butonese and local Muslims (Kennedy 1955 cited in Chauvel 1990).

The Butonese continued to have low status in Ambon throughout the twentieth century. From the 1970s, Butonese migrants in Ambon occupied low level economic niches, working as *becak* (pedicab) drivers, porters, and labourers; in fact it was primarily the Butonese who engaged in the 'unskilled jobs and the informal sector economy' (Tirtosudarmo 2000: 186). The Butonese were considered to be of lower status than Ambonese by both Christian and Muslim Ambonese (Chauvel 1990), who considered them 'inferior, backward

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This may be a form of acknowledgement that Muna's political overlord, the Wolio Sultanate, is to the east, so this should be considered going 'up'. Wilson (2008: 203) noted that Tobelo communities in Halmahera used 'up' to refer to the direction of Ternate, the location of the Sultanate which had exerted political control over them. Muna speakers refer to the journey from Ambon to Baubau, however, as down, not up, meaning that rather than up always pointing to Baubau, perhaps the position of Baubau relative to Muna determined that 'up' is always east. Another possible explanation for this usage is suggested by Heyerdahl (1974). He found that east is considered up in Polynesia, and attributed this to the fact that the prominent winds and currents come from the east. The fact that wind and water flow to the west suggests that the west is 'down' and the east is 'up'. This does not explain the Muna case, however, since in most of the Muna-speaking area the west monsoon is stronger than the east, and that would indicate that the east, and Ambon, is down.

people' (Bartels 2003: 149). Many Boneoge informants told me about having been disparaged by Ambonese as dirty and uncivilised.

Some aspects of a typical 'migrant' reputation did adhere to the Butonese in Ambon. Mearns (1996) reports that both locals and Butonese represent Butonese migrants as hard-working, entrepreneurial, and careful with money. Butonese speak of escaping a difficult existence in Buton, and being willing to work at any job to support themselves in Ambon; the Butonese remained in manual, unskilled jobs even as Bugis migrants entered the middle class. On the other hand, the locals also held negative stereotypes about the Butonese, who were sometimes seen as drunkards with the potential for violence, and of lower status (ibid.). It may be that a minority of Butonese youth attracted the negative reputation while the majority of adults were hard-working. The industrious and frugal character of Butonese migrants is said to have enabled them to purchase land from the Ambonese, once this was legal. Boneoge people tended to valorise their journeys, with slow accumulation by hard work leading to the eventual purchase of land and construction of a good quality house, and contrast this with the Ambonese, who they described as lazy, hedonistic spendthrifts, intent on the latest fashions, and willing to sell their land in order to avoid working.

The next section describes experiences of Boneoge migrants in Ambon, built from informants' recollections. There were Boneoge people in Ambon before World War II, but my informants' earliest memories mostly concerned the post-war period. Boneoge people in Ambon worked as labourers, pedicab drivers, fishers, farmers and traders, but in what follows I place relatively more emphasis on the traders since it is their experiences which have most shaped the changes in status in Boneoge. I separate the period 1950-1970, which was still part of the 'sailing era', from that of 1970-1999, which was the zenith of the Ambon era and the period when some traders managed to accumulate capital and become successful entrepreneurs.

3.3.1 Early days: 1950-1970

The people from Boneoge proper, although having a background in both sailing and farming, did not generally engage in farming in Maluku. Most were still oriented towards sailing during this period, but those who did go on migration to

Ambon tended to be oriented towards work in the city. Those who went to Ambon during this period tended to stay with a relative in the central city area, and although some obtained work as labourers, porters and pedicab-drivers, many worked as small scale traders. Their goods were either fish or such small commodities such as cigarettes which could be sold with little capital, or could even be sold on behalf of the owner – without any capital at all.

It was common in this period for men to go on migrations to Ambon for 4-12 months at a time, sending money to their families as they could, and then to return to Boneoge for a few months. An example of a migration to Ambon in the late 1960s comes from La Rau, aged 52.[99]

> My father was a fisherman, and had a house on the beach beside the mosque. I finished primary school in Boneoge, and then went to Ambon to join my older brother, who was selling cigarettes there. I used to fish with my father, but I decided to go to Ambon in order to become independent. In Ambon, I slept in the market. I worked for two years building up capital, coming back to Boneoge from time to time. In Ambon I married a woman from Waara, a village 10km from Boneoge.

As this story shows, going on a migration to Ambon might involve sleeping in the market, relying on a relative who had gone to Ambon earlier, and getting a job trading small commodities in order to try to accumulate capital. Most other men engaging in petty trade were selling fish in the market. Most did not bring their wives and children.

Before the 1970s, very few Boneoge women travelled out of the village; informants described how Ambon was a place dominated by men. One migrant who went on migrations to Ambon during the 1960s to sell cigarettes (both 'modern' cigarettes and traditional Bugis tobacco sold in bamboo tubes (BM: *besolo*)) described this situation:

> In those days [before 1970], it was only men who would go to Ambon...if we heard that a woman was arriving, her ship would be mobbed. She wouldn't be in Ambon long before finding a husband...People were hungry for girls. Back then, women wouldn't travel, and even men thought twice about it.

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[99] This story, and others which follow, are assembled from interviews which I conducted in order to collect personal migration histories. In some cases informants were interviewed more than once; I have assembled their responses into stories in this form for coherence. It is important to note that they remain stories told by informants rather than reporting of fact.

Most of these petty traders did not succeed in obtaining capital, and some did not even manage to send much money to their families. As it was still the sailing era in Boneoge, those who did accumulate capital could use it to undertake sailing voyages, as a trader rather than as crew. Those who had capital were actively sought out by captains – as happened to La Ode Taate, who went to Ambon in the 1960s:

> I finished primary school in 1964, and went to Ambon. I was 15. There, I left my clothes with a relative, but there were many people staying in a small house so I slept elsewhere. The houses had gaba-gaba [woven frond] walls and sago palm roofs. I was asked to sell cigarettes for someone...after two years of doing that, I had saved some capital and had some stock of my own. Then in 1965 there was the PKI [Indonesian Communist Party] problem; we attacked the Chinese shops, and destroyed their merchandise. Prices shot up during the unrest...I sold what stock I had and made Rp900,000. I was approached by some Boneoge people who were sailing to Java - they had a ship but not enough capital to buy a cargo. We were looking for a cargo of copra to take to Java, but we didn't get one, so we bought a cargo of salty fish in Geser [off Seram] and brought it to Ambon. Then we took palm oil to Buton.[100] Thus began my sailing years. I eventually became a ship captain, and kept sailing until 1973.

La Ode Taate managed to begin trading cigarettes without capital, since the owner of the cigarettes trusted him enough to extend credit, and he also managed to accumulate substantial capital. La Ode Taate's story portrays a theme of struggle which is common in Boneoge migration stories: starting with nothing, working diligently towards the accumulation of capital, and using that capital to become a sea trader and then captain.

La Ode Taate enjoyed almost a decade of sailing before the decline of the sailing era and the overwhelming turn towards Ambon as the favoured destination for Boneoge migration. By this time he was married and had several children to support:

> By 1973 it was getting more difficult to find crew to sail with, as many young men were going to Ambon for work. I briefly tried transporting goods from Jakarta to Ambon on the PELNI ship Brau, with my cousin, but we didn't make money. So I went to Ambon again.

Thus La Ode Taate became one of hundreds of Boneoge men going to Ambon at the time, enjoying the political stability and economic development of eastern

[100] Palm oil was used for lamps in Buton.

Indonesia. Boneoge migrations to Ambon from the 1970s onwards were different in several important respects from the migration of the previous two decades.

3.3.2 Family migration: 1970-1999

'Ambon – it's where we work' – Boneoge migrant to Ambon

As explained earlier, the quashing of the rebellions and conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s and boosts to Ambon's economy provided by new Japanese investment in the form of (initially) four fishing companies (including PT. Tofiko) led to the arrival of large numbers of migrants in Ambon. The fishing industry became a major focus of Boneoge people's activities, with many of the men working in the fish market by the 1970s. According to informants, by the early 1970s the Butonese had wrested 'control' of the fish market from the hands of the Ambonese. Ethnic specialisation was widespread, and informants frequently spoke about which ethnic group 'controlled' an economic niche; the Bugis in Ambon were said to 'control' the clothes market, for instance. Dick has linked ethnic specialisation to trust issues:

> When trust provides the only element of security in hostile and uncertain markets, ties of kinship and language are a valuable protection. It is the importance of this personal element in market transactions which accounts for the high degree of specialisation of each suku, and even branches of them, in particular trades (1975a: 73).

As Dick states, even branches of ethnic groups can be the focus of such informal alliances in the *rantau* (migration location). For Boneoge people, sharing a niche with other Muslim migrants is desirable, sharing with other Butonese people even more so: in order of increasing trust are other Muna-speaking Butonese, other people from the villages near Boneoge, other Boneoge people, and kin. All of these levels of informal alliance can be found in various *rantau* in eastern Indonesia.

Since Boneoge people had a powerful presence in the fish market, many newly arrived Boneoge migrants found opportunities to earn money in the market, assisted by kin. Boneoge people often asserted that they 'controlled' the fish market, implying that many worked there and that they felt comfortable surrounded by allies. Some Boneoge men achieved wealth from trading in the

fish market; two of them, Haji Kati and Haji Ara, became among the largest fish traders in Ambon, by buying fish from the Japanese companies' prawn ships.[101] The possibility of achieving wealth inspired hundreds of young Boneoge men to want to trade fish in Ambon.

The big change which occurred around 1970 was not just the higher volume of Boneoge migrants going to Ambon, and the ease with which they found employment, but the new trend of wives and children accompanying men to Ambon. In the previous decades, the women of Boneoge proper had been stationary while the men were mobile (sailing or working in Ambon). With the safer travel of the 1970s, a safe city environment in Ambon and virtually guaranteed income, it became common for wives and children to move to Ambon as well. A man would initially go on a migration to Ambon without his family, but if he managed to achieve a stable income, he could afford to go home and bring his family out to Ambon. To do this, he would need enough money to pay the transportation costs to Ambon, to be able to cover higher living costs in Ambon (renting a house, for instance, rather than staying with relatives), and to be able to forego the extra resources obtained through the farming which his wife would normally carry out in Boneoge in his absence.

This style of family migration began in the 1970s and gained momentum after that, so that by the 1990s, it was said, 'only the elderly remained in Boneoge'. Although that was perhaps an exaggeration, one could say that in the 1990s the vast majority of Boneoge people under the age of 50 had either worked in Ambon at some point or were living there. Boneoge became quiet, with many of its houses empty and closed up or occupied only by the elderly. Still, some women stayed in Boneoge to raise their children. Some of these women would travel back and forth between Boneoge (where their children were) and Ambon (where their husbands were). Another consequence of the migration of entire nuclear families to Ambon, and their dependence on wages in Ambon rather than subsistence agriculture in Boneoge, was that agriculture in Boneoge became neglected. Boneoge settlers in Ambon who had money generally continued to

[101] The ships fished the waters of eastern Indonesia for prawns, which they exported to Japan. Whatever other fish they caught in their nets was sold at Ambon. Haji Kati was one of the primary buyers of this fish, and this business arrangement was to make him one of the richest and best known traders in Ambon.

visit Boneoge regularly; some visited every Lebaran (at the end of the fasting month) while others returned once every few years. But others, especially those without much money to spare, only came back to bury a parent, and some never visited at all.

Many of the Boneoge people who settled in Ambon lived in the port communities of Waihaong and Dok, and these two neighbourhoods became the centre of the Boneoge diaspora in Ambon.[102] By the 1970s, any young man from Boneoge proper could go to Ambon and stay with relatives in the port neighbourhoods of Waihaong, see many familiar faces of neighbours, relatives and friends from Boneoge, and expect that the relatives would then help him find work – often selling fish in the market.[103] Thus going on a migration to Ambon was no longer a hopeful journey into uncertainty and danger, but became more like taking a short trip to visit family in a neighbouring village. 'It's like it's closer than Baubau', people would tell me, referring to how (psychologically) easy it is to go to Ambon.

There were work opportunities for women also, for example several women described working in a pepper factory, in the PT Tofiko warehouse, or selling small consumer goods in the neighbourhood. For those living in Waihaong/Dok, communication with Boneoge was easy and regular, with many travellers going between Boneoge and Ambon. Migrants who established themselves financially often summoned young relatives out from Boneoge to join them. By the late 1990s there were more Boneoge people living in Ambon than in Boneoge.[104] In some ways Ambon had become the centre and Boneoge the outpost, the

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[102] These are two densely populated *kampung* (neighbourhoods) in central Ambon, behind the Al-Fatah mosque and adjacent to the Ambon bay, which have been the home of Muslim migrants for decades. The Dok community, across the Batu Gantung River from Waihaong, developed later than that at Waihaong, and partially due to overcrowding at Waihaong. Informants told me of reclaiming land at the river's edge in order to avoid having to purchase land. There was some sort of struggle against the local government who sought to move the Butonese *kampung* at Dok, but the residents managed to stay.

[103] The Boneoge community in Waihaong/Dok was interspersed with thousands of other Muslim migrants, but this meant that it was a community of shared interests in terms of religion and the 'migrant' identity; indeed many of these other Muslim migrants were other Butonese or Bugis, with whom the Butonese share cultural similarities.

[104] This was shown when the Boneoge people returning from Ambon in 1999 outnumbered the current population of Boneoge, even though not all Boneoge people in Ambon had come back to the village.

repository of ancestral history and ethnic identity which some people rarely visited.[105]

Young Boneoge people growing up in Ambon tended not to go on migrations elsewhere; many had not been anywhere else until the 1999 riots induced them to move. That is, young Boneoge men raised in Ambon did not seem to need to go on migrations as a rite-of-passage (i.e. a cultural obligation); they had access to jobs in Ambon and stayed put. The dominant model for Boneoge migration became settled long term 'family migration', a change from previous models which included circular migration to Ambon and nomadic sailing journeys. With Waihaong and Dok as the centre of Boneoge migration and the most important Boneoge diaspora, Boneoge migration was thus in keeping with the urbanisation occurring throughout the archipelago.[106]

The above description applies to people from Boneoge proper, not to those from the farming communities of Mawaruanu and Lawonolita (or 'Kampung Lama'). Some of the latter began migrating to Ambon in the 1950s, but the peak of their Ambon migrations came when their communities were forced to move down the hill and integrate with Boneoge proper around 1970. At that point, many moved to settle in Ambon. Their migrations, though, were very different from those described above. They generally moved to rural Ambon and made gardens there, in particular setting up a diaspora community at Halong (about 10km outside of Ambon city). They did not live in Waihaong, nor did they become traders in the fish market, lacking the necessary kin connections and experience in trading. As one Matoka man described his migration to Ambon:

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[105] Mearns has described the *kampung* of Silale (1996, 1999, 2003) which adjoins Waihaong and, before the 1999 riots at least, shared many of its characteristics as an inner city *kampung* of migrants from Sulawesi. Many of the residents were Bugis or Butonese, and were working in the market or harbour as labourers or pedicab drivers (Mearns 1999). Much of the densely packed *kampung* was destroyed during World War II, and rebuilt afterwards. Migrants from South and Southeast Sulawesi began arriving and staying for longer than they had on previous migrations (ibid.: 23-4). Ambonese people saw Silale as a physically close but foreign other world of which they were frightened, since the Butonese and Bugis had a reputation for violence (Mearns 2003). This attitude ensured that locals rarely entered, which meant that migrants had the power of ownership over this space; this would have contributed to the feelings of comfort and belonging which migrants described when discussing Waihaong.

[106] The shift from circular migration to settling in urban areas has been common in Indonesia since the expansion of cities and markets (Rodenburg 1997: 64). Rodenburg found a similar shift in Sumatra: from migrating as a rite of passage to permanently leaving the village.

> I was born in Mawaruanu. We used to live in the hills and grow gardens, but then the government forced us to move down. I went to Ambon in 1970...what could I do here? When I went to Ambon I did not know Indonesian. I worked as a porter in the market. I also made a garden at Halong Tanah Merah. I spent 30 years there. We keep gardening; we don't know anything else.

While in Boneoge farmers had to continually guard crops against pigs and monkeys, the lack of such pests in Ambon meant that during periods of inactivity in the agricultural cycle, the farmers would seek income in the city in the typical dirty-hard-labour niche attributed to Butonese migrants, as porters (in the market or at the docks), *becak* drivers, and labourers. By the late 1980s many of their children worked in Ambon city at these jobs (porter, *becak*-driver) full time and no longer planted gardens. These migrants, not having much money to spare, rarely returned to visit Boneoge; many had never been back during the decades preceding 1999 when the Ambon conflict forced their return.

3.4 Other Migrations: Malaysia and East Timor

During the Ambon era, the great majority of Boneoge migrants went there, but a few went to two other destinations: Malaysia and East Timor. A much smaller number went elsewhere, such as to Java, Makassar, and Ternate.

Large scale migration from Indonesia to Malaysia began in the 1980s (Tirtosudarmo 2000: 187), and Boneoge people did participate in this migration, although only 37 Boneoge people had been to Malaysia when I carried out my 2002 survey. Employment agents initially came to Boneoge in the early 1980s to recruit TKI (*Tenaga Kerja Indonesia*, Indonesian Foreign Workers). Those Boneoge people who signed up worked legally in Malaysia for about 10 months on large construction sites, and were housed on site, which allowed only very limited contact with the local population. These people sometimes later returned to Malaysia illegally to continue working at construction sites.

Malaysia did not catch on as a popular destination for Boneoge migrants. It appears that most of those who tried it subsequently switched to other migrations. Only a handful of Boneoge men have gone on migrations to Malaysia since 2002, as there was a crackdown on illegal foreign workers in

Malaysia; in 2002 one of my neighbour's sons phoned his parents from the jungle in Malaysia (using a mobile phone) as he was being pursued by Malaysian police. Others returned home during the amnesty offered to visa overstayers, and now migrate elsewhere. Note that Butonese migration patterns vary greatly from one village to the next. In one village neighbouring Boneoge, migrants have continued going to Malaysia over the years, and it remains the most popular destination.

Some Boneoge people went to East Timor during the Ambon era. Indonesia annexed East Timor in 1975; by 1979 it was considered a new area for expansion by the mobile Butonese population. A few Boneoge people (between 10 and 20) went there for fishing or trade, at first mostly going back and forth between Boneoge and East Timor. Early pioneer migrants then established residences on land, brought out their families and summoned younger relatives to work with them. Early entry to East Timor often depended on getting assistance from the military.[107] One man knew members of the military in Papua, and when the soldiers were transferred to East Timor, they invited him to come with them, to help as a porter.[108] He eventually set up a kiosk, which in time became a shop, doing well enough to undertake the *hajj*. Several other Boneoge people fished in East Timor, and lived in the village of Hera outside of Dili. The September 1999 referendum in East Timor, in which the population voted overwhelmingly for independence, led most (non East Timorese) Indonesians to leave around that time. The Boneoge migrants returned to Buton, and none have been back to Timor Leste since 1999. Although these people returned to Buton with most of their possessions, they were classified as refugees and given government assistance; however, this refugee flow was virtually insignificant compared to the flow from Ambon which occurred in the same year.

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[107] One person described to me his route of entry around 1980. He went to Kupang, and paid the police to smuggle him into East Timor in police uniform, at a time when only the armed forces (which included the police) were allowed in. Sometimes trade also involved the military. Early migrant traders, after selling their goods in East Timor, would sometimes purchase supplies such as oil or batteries from the military to take back and sell in Buton.

[108] These porters for the military were known as TBO (*Tenaga Bantuan Operasi* – operational support staff), which meant carrying supplies for the military as they entered the jungle. The military would come to the market to recruit such help when they were launching an operation.

3.5 Cataclysmic End to the Ambon Era: Conflict & Return

Violence broke out in Ambon on January 19, 1999, apparently sparked by a fight between a local and a migrant in a bus terminal (Human Rights Watch 1999). The violence quickly spread, coming to be seen as a conflict between Christians and Muslims. However, many migrants describe the conflict as being related to resentment against migrants, specifically BBMJ, or Bugis, Makassarese, Butonese, and Javanese. In 2000, the U.N. reported the death toll at approximately 2500, with over 400,000 internally displaced people, over 18,000 houses burned, and over 1000 houses of worship burned (UN 2000). In 2001 official figures indicated that since January 1999 approximately 160,000 ethnic Butonese migrants had returned to Buton as refugees, a number equivalent to 35% of the pre-existing population; obviously this has had a huge impact on Butonese society.[109] There was tremendous variety in the conditions experienced by these returnees following their return.[110]

The Boneoge community in Ambon suffered several deaths, and extensive loss of property and homes. Boneoge people fled Ambon (or other Maluku locations such as Seram and Buru Island) and returned to Boneoge, mostly in two waves, following the first riots (January 19, 1999) and the second major outbreak (August-September 1999). Following the second outbreak, Boneoge people in Ambon became concentrated in two areas: the navy base at Halong, and Waihaong/Dok. Those at Waihaong/Dok describe rarely sleeping as they had to keep vigil against enemy attack. Many were unable to carry out their regular

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[109] An additional 10,000 Butonese refugees arrived in Buton from East Timor in September 1999.

[110] I toured a number of refugee camps and settlements in Buton in 2000. Some refugees had brought cash and goods with them, but many brought nothing. While some had received government-built houses, the majority had to construct their own simple houses. Many spent periods living with relatives, or renting space in or under others' homes. Often, land for planting had been made available to them, but many were not accustomed to an agricultural lifestyle, and were confused as to how to deal with monkeys and wild pigs which wreak havoc on crops in Buton. Many had difficulty finding employment, and were struggling to feed their families and pay for their children's education. Some returned to their ancestral villages in Buton, where they may have had relatives who still acknowledged them, but many others returned to a different part of Buton than that from which they originally came. Of the large number of migrants originally from Binongko, for instance, few returned there, as it is a small infertile island far from the administrative center. During their years in Ambon, some frequently came back and forth to Buton, others had not seen Buton for 50 years, or had never seen it – some reported that their ancestors migrated to Ambon up to seven generations ago. Some spoke their local Butonese language, but many others, especially the young people, did not.

occupations due to the security situation, and the guard duties imposed an extra burden. Many of those living outside of the Waihaong/Dok diaspora lost their houses, as they lay in Christian areas and were occupied or looted and burned. Farmers lost their crops as it became unsafe to go to the fields to harvest. Many Boneoge people in both areas decided to return to Buton at some point in 1999.

Boneoge was inundated with refugees by the middle of 1999 (all of these 'refugees' were in fact Boneoge people who had previously migrated to Ambon, or their children). An estimated 2000 people returned to Boneoge as refugees, when the population in Boneoge at the time was 1481; still others did not return at all during this period.[111] Although some of the returnees had houses to return to, many had to stay with relatives, or, failing that, to live underneath someone's house. Small one-room houses had several families living in them. Those who had the financial resources sought to build new houses, if they had access to land through descent.

Government aid of cash and rice assisted the refugees to feed their families. These consisted of Rp144,000 (US$16) and 38kg of rice per refugee per three months. This aid continued until February 2003, when a final payout consisted of Rp3.5 million (US$385) per family. The large amounts of money at stake in these distributions meant that there was considerable deception and corruption involved in its management. In the years following the riots, many refugees went back to Ambon, but returned to Buton every time an aid distribution was occurring.

Following the initial surge of population towards Boneoge, many families, or at least the head of the family, went on migrations back to Ambon or tried going to a new location, using kin-based networks to find opportunities. Others stayed in Boneoge, either fishing or seeking casual labouring opportunities (or working

[111] The Social Department's official figure (compiled May 2001) for the number of refugees returning to Boneoge was 3629, but this was substantially inflated, since the total population of the village (including the refugees) was only 3556 in 2002. I calculated a total of 2002 refugees by subtracting the December 1998 population (1481) from the August 2001 population (which was 3483, and included the refugees). Both of these figures were compiled by village officials and not directly relevant to calculations of government aid distributions. The discrepancy between the government's figure of 3629 and mine of 2002 is due to, among other factors, refugees who came to Buton, registered, and then went elsewhere, and secondly, to locals who managed to get themselves listed as refugees. The figures of the Social Department had become distorted by these efforts to access additional aid money. Other estimates placed government figures at approximately 100% inflated (Muhlis 2000).

as bus conductors, speed boat drivers, or limestone miners), or living off remittances from young relatives in Hawaii.

Boneoge refugees tended to explain the conflict as due to jealousy on the part of Ambonese people toward the economic success of migrants. Ambonese were portrayed as lazy and only willing to work in government jobs, Butonese migrants as hard-working and willing to work any job no matter how low or dirty. Butonese migrants saved money slowly but steadily, but Ambonese were unable to save, spending their money on celebrations and parties, and so eventually the Butonese were able to buy land and houses from the Ambonese. The conflict was then started by the Ambonese as an excuse to repossess the land. An informant explained:

> I went to Ambon in 1956. The riots happened because the Ambonese were envious....in the 1970s they started selling their land, and were pushed to the outskirts. Ambonese are lazy, they are used to being taken care of by the Dutch, receiving a wage...they don't want to trade, they don't want to work. So the Butonese could enter [i.e. had a niche]. Eventually it was the migrants who had multi-storey houses....the Ambonese were envious, they wanted to get their land back. But we already held the deeds.

Another common explanation was that shadowy forces had tricked the Ambonese into starting the conflict. This explanation tended to portray the Ambonese as good people. In almost all returnee accounts of the conflict, the inter-religious aspect is downplayed; the conflict is more often portrayed as pitting Ambonese against migrants such as themselves. When speaking of the 'other side' in the conflict, they most often referred to them not as 'Christians' or '*obet*' (the slang term often used for the Christian side), but as 'Ambonese'.[112]

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[112] Three other pieces of evidence bolster the argument that returnees did not view the Ambon riots primarily as an inter-religious conflict. First, returnees told many stories about how their Christian neighbours had saved them, or protected their houses. Inevitably it was Christians from far away villages who attacked settlements, rather than their Christians neighbours (incidentally I heard the same type of stories from Christian refugees from the North Maluku conflict in Manado in 2000, telling how their Muslim neighbours had saved them). Second, Boneoge returnees tended to criticise the involvement of Java-based right wing Muslim groups such as Laskar Jihad, which went to Ambon ostensibly to participate in social programs for peace, but according to returnees tended to be more interested in prolonging the conflict. Third, some returnees expressed anxiety about Ambonese Muslims, saying that Butonese people could be the target of their anger upon return to Ambon, since the Ambonese Muslims were disappointed with the Butonese for leaving.

The Waihaong/Dok diaspora suffered a drop in population in 1999-2000 when many people returned to Boneoge. Although Waihaong was relatively safe from violent attack, the strong connections which many Boneoge people in Waihaong had with Boneoge meant that many chose to return anyway. By 2003 enough Boneoge people had returned to Waihaong/Dok that it was once again a thriving diaspora community.

The Ambon riots caused significant upheavals in people's lives, even amongst those who managed to find another migration location shortly afterwards. A heightened sense of danger is now associated with various migration locations in eastern Indonesia, including Papua. Migrants have shifted towards a strategy of minimising their investment in the *rantau*, by building their main house in Boneoge and only renting in the *rantau*. There have been several incidents of violence directed at migrants in Papua, including the attacks on migrants in Wamena on October 6, 2000. Many migrants live and work in the markets of Papuan towns, which renders them an easy (to find) target. Locals sometimes resent such migrant traders as they represent the extraction of local money and its transferral to other regions. For Boneoge migrants, the home village has taken on a meaning of 'safe haven', in contrast to the dangerous (yet lucrative) *rantau*.

3.6 The Papua Era: Trading Clothes in Regional Towns

> 'If you want to go to Irian, but you don't have family there, don't try it.'
> Boneoge migrant to Papua

During the 1970s, most Boneoge people preferred to go on migrations to Ambon than to Papua. Some people did, however, go on migrations to Papua, often for the fishing through which one could earn a better living than in Buton. A few Boneoge people went to Papua to trade, and found the level of competition in the markets pleasantly low. Up until 1999, though, the majority of Boneoge migrants were in Ambon, with those in Papua being concentrated in Jayapura (the capital city). Since 1999, however, Ambon has been considered less safe, and those people in possession of capital have increasingly sought out the regional towns in Papua (such as Biak, Serui, and Nabire) for their emerging markets, and gone to trade clothes there. A high proportion of Boneoge people now desire to

accumulate capital and then become clothes traders in Papua. So many people are doing this that people refer to the current period as 'the Papua era'. It is also referred to as 'the Hawaii era' – but the Hawaii migration (discussed in the following section) is only possible for young men, not the general population, and is often used as a method of accumulating capital in order to be become a clothes trader in Papua.

Boneoge sailors sometimes visited West Papua during the period from 1963-1969, when the territory was administered by Indonesia.[113] Boneoge sailors used to go to the Kaimana region on the west coast of Papua to obtain fish to take to Java, as explained earlier. They fished offshore, and had little contact with Papuans during this time.

In the early 1970s, Papua was opened up to migrants, and many came from eastern Indonesia (McGibbon 2004: 19-20). At this time some Boneoge people moved to Jayapura to fish all year round, due to the better availability of fish and higher market prices compared with those in Buton. Many of these fishers have settled long term in Papua and rarely visit Boneoge. Most Boneoge people in Jayapura live in the Butonese *kampung* at Dok IX Bawah.[114] Dok IX Bawah is on the coast about eight kilometres from downtown Jayapura, and consists mainly of simple wooden houses built on stilts over water. Living over water allows the people to build cheaply and avoid complicated land rights issues, and ensures easy access to the ocean for fishing.

Boneoge traders also began going to Papua in the 1970s. Some worked in the markets of Jayapura, but competition was already fierce, so some decided to trade from village to village, or in one of the regional towns. La Ode Hami went on a migration to Papua during the early years of its integration into Indonesia:

> In 1972 I went to Irian, to Merauke, Sorong, Biak, Manokwari, Jayapura, Dobo, Tual [various towns in Papua and southeast Maluku]. I sold second hand clothes and other goods, catching a ride there on someone's ship. There

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[113] West Papua was integrated into Indonesia after the 1969 Act of Free Choice, a dubious referendum where Indonesia hand-picked 1022 representatives who would vote for all of Papua; they voted under military intimidation and unanimously chose to join Indonesia (ICG 2006). The Indonesian government named the territory 'Irian Jaya', but the name was changed to Papua in 2000.

[114] There are also Butonese *kampung* at Hamadi Tanjung and Abe Pantai, both part of greater Jayapura.

> weren't any Butonese people there yet...Butonese people were only in Jayapura at that time. I married a Serui woman, but I couldn't handle it, her relatives would take my trade goods. They said they would pay me back but they didn't. You couldn't get rich like that.

La Ode Hami left Papua, and his wife, in 1986 and went to Ambon, where he worked selling fish in the market for Haji Kati, and married a Boneoge woman. He characterised the Butonese method of migration:

> In Irian, the Butonese go in first, and then the Bugis follow. In Irian and Ambon, the first time we go there to work, we ask the permission of the chief. Then we bring our relatives...we return to Boneoge and invite our younger brothers [to join us in Irian]. We give the Irianese cigarettes, and they call us *ipar* [brother in-law]...this means they like us.

This quote suggests the importance of being a pioneer in migrations, and the prevalence of summoning young relatives out to the *rantau*, important aspects of Boneoge migration to which I will return in Chapter 6. This kind of chain migration has persisted, and often explains how Boneoge people become clothes traders in Papua.

Clothes trading is indeed the key migration of the 'Papua era'; many Boneoge people aspire to go to Papua to trade clothes once they have enough capital. Dozens of individuals have managed to set themselves up as traders in the markets of regional towns in Papua, usually with the assistance of kin who preceded them. The traders sell their produce in the market, either from small kiosks (*kaki lima*)[115] or, once they can afford to rent a space, from market shops. These traders periodically travel to Java to purchase new stock, usually in Surabaya, often stopping in Boneoge on the way. This keeps them in regular contact with family in Boneoge, and their frequent visits also demonstrate their success. These clothes traders will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Communities of Boneoge migrants have developed in a number of towns in Papua. By 2003 there were Boneoge communities in the towns of Serui (said to consist of several hundred families)[116], Nabire, and Biak, and smaller groups in

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[115] *Kaki lima* are wheeled carts which carry produce; *kaki lima* means 'five legs', referring to the four legs of the cart plus the human pushing it.

[116] The Serui community suffered a blow in 2002, when the PELNI ship Rinjani stopped going to Serui. This meant that migrants had to change ships in Biak or Ambon in order to get to Boneoge. It remains to be seen whether this will have a dampening effect on the number of migrants going to Serui.

Timika and Sorong. These groups grew through kin-based networks (see Chapter 6) and developed into close-knit groups whose members live and work close together. Such communities usually have an identifiable 'head', who is the highest status Boneoge person in that location, usually the wealthiest Boneoge trader living there, who provides jobs for many young people from Boneoge.

During visits to Boneoge, migrants are identified with their *rantau*, and show group solidarity and shared pride with others from the same *rantau* – and a kind of status competition with other *rantau*. Each year when the 'Papua migrants' return to Boneoge, there is a soccer game between the Nabire crowd and the Serui crowd, with several hundred Australian dollars riding on the outcome; the betting serves to demonstrate the migrants' financial success, and thus status. There have also been *pesta joget* (dance parties) held individually by the Serui migrants and the Nabire migrants, competing to see which is more highly attended.

There have been a range of different migrations to Papua over the past decades, but the most common one now is oriented around clothes trading in regional towns. When Boneoge people accumulate capital, they increasingly use it to become traders in Papua. The most popular way to accumulate capital, especially since 1999, is through working in Hawaii.

3.7 The Hawaii Era: Earning Dollars over Seas

One evening during the early days of my fieldwork in Boneoge, I was in a makeshift 'café' which had been set up on the beach for the 2001 fasting month of *Ramadhan*, as a place where people could eat and drink to break the fast. A group of youths arrived, the boys amongst them strikingly different from other young men whom I had met in Boneoge. They were thick-bodied and muscular, wore bracelets, neck chains, and expensive jackets, and carried themselves with a swaggering confidence. These were 'Hawaii boys', home for a brief visit between contracts at sea, out spending money on their girlfriends.

'Hawaii boys' are young Boneoge men who work on Japanese fishing boats, most of which fish for blue fin tuna in international waters all over the world,

and many of which are based in Hawaii.[117] The boys go on contracts lasting from six months to two years, spending their time exclusively on the ships, except for brief port visits to stock up on supplies in cities such as Honolulu, Halifax (Canada), Lima (Peru), Capetown (South Africa), Hobart (Australia), Auckland (New Zealand), and Las Palmas (Spain).[118]

After 1999, Boneoge people continued to go on migrations to Ambon and Papua, but the Hawaii migration quickly became the most desirable migration for most men aged 20-35. When I conducted a survey of migration habits in 2002, 138 men were away working in Hawaii, and another 40 had previously worked in Hawaii. Returning Hawaii workers, with their high salaries, muscled bodies, experience of the world, and high status, are powerful role models for teenage boys, most of whom prefer to try to work in Hawaii over continuing their education.[119] As one village elder told me, young men 'see people with degrees who are unemployed, so Hawaii becomes the ideal for them'.

I came to recognise returning Hawaii boys by their confidence, free time, available spending money, and 'decorated' appearance. Their decorations are symbols of their international experiences and wealth, including jewellery and expensive brands of jackets and jeans. They tend to be well built due to years of hard work and a steady diet on the boats – thin young boys leaving for Hawaii return two years later as thick-bodied men. They spend their holidays in Boneoge courting young girls, visiting family, relaxing, and often drinking beer or *kameko* (palm wine) with other Hawaii boys at night. I got to know many of these men during their brief visits to Boneoge, and listened to their stories about their lives on the ships.

The high salaries are the main reason that men seek this work. Earnings are paid in U.S. or Singaporean currency, and during my time in the community

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[117] Almost all of the ships are Japanese, but a few Boneoge men work on New Zealand or European owned ships.

[118] Hawaii boys could appear well travelled. In the early days of my fieldwork in this quiet village in remote Buton, I was chatting with a young neighbour who was about 27. He asked me where I was from. I explained that I was from New Zealand, and upon a request for further clarification, Auckland. 'Do you ever eat at Food Alley?' he asked, naming an Indonesian food stall in downtown Auckland, and continuing, 'I go there all the time'.

[119] Village leaders complain about this, saying 'in Ambon people are enthusiastic about education, but here in Boneoge, the kids just want to go to Hawaii'. Many young girls also leave school after junior high (age 15), hoping to marry a Hawaii boy. Some parents lament this trend, but most are happy to receive remittances from sons who go to Hawaii.

often reached US$1000 (Rp10 million) per month, before bonuses. Salaries are not uniform, because they are determined by the employment agents in Jakarta who offer the contracts. The '*delegasi*', a sum equal to about 60% of the monthly salary, is deposited into a nominated bank account in Indonesia – usually that of the man's wife or mother.[120] The other 40% is given to the man in a lump sum at the end of the contract (upon his return to Jakarta); this might amount to US$5000 (Rp50 million) or more. Even at the low end of the Hawaii pay scale, the wife or mother would still receive about Rp900,000 (US$100) per month, which is more than adequate to run a household in Boneoge (some households exist on Rp300,000 per month). At the high end of the pay scale, one two-year contract would provide enough money to build a luxurious house in Boneoge as well as providing start-up capital for a business. This earning potential places the Hawaii boys at the top of the hierarchy of migrants in Boneoge.[121]

Getting a job on a Hawaii ship through one of these agents is not a simple matter. Hawaii boys told me that one needs a personal introduction from an established Hawaii worker and a bribe of up to Rp5 million (US$550); the higher the bribe, the quicker the contract is ready. Arranging a passport can also be expensive, since those who do not have all the required documents must pay several million rupiah in 'extra charges'. An applicant must also have enough money to cover living costs while in Jakarta arranging the contract, and transportation costs to get to Jakarta from Boneoge. Men often borrow the required amount from relatives or close friends who have completed a Hawaii contract.

An aspiring Hawaii worker must first travel from Boneoge to Jakarta, a three day journey on the PELNI inter-island shipping service. When in Jakarta, he must spend many days building a relationship with an agent. Boneoge men have formed a sort of collective in Jakarta, with two rented houses in the port area of Tanjung Priok, in order to have cheap accommodation. Dozens of Boneoge men

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[120] It is standard in Boneoge for working men to surrender their entire salary either to their mother (if unmarried) or to their wife (if married).

[121] This quote, amalgamated from two informants, attests to the high status of Hawaii migrants. The topic under discussion was who women like to marry: 'In the past, there was no Hawaii, and boys from Ambon were the ideal...migrants to Ambon were respected here. After the Ambon riots, now that there are so many Hawaii boys...Ambon is nothing.'

sleep on the floor of these houses, and spend their days at the agent's office. Even if the application process goes smoothly, one may wait three months before getting a placement, and if one's bribe is insufficient, one's placement may be given away to a higher bidder. After successfully completing a first contract, though, it is easier to arrange subsequent contracts.

In the dormitories, first-timers get informal training from experienced Hawaii boys on how to carry out various tasks when on the ships. This training is very important, so that the new employees learn the job more quickly when on the ships; applicants are often tested on their skills by the agent before they depart. In this way, Boneoge men maintain their reputation as competent workers – and agents continue to place Boneoge men on the ships as long as they rarely receive complaints about their abilities.

During their time in Jakarta, young Boneoge men are also introduced to the sins of the big city: drinking, drugs, and women. Young men arriving from Boneoge, often 18-20 years old and not yet experienced with such things, soon become so. Hawaii boys returning from contracts are expected to pay for parties, having recently received their lump sum salary; it would be considered poor manners not to do so, after having enjoyed such parties before departure. These parties are the stuff of legend; Hawaii boys told me that they like to 'close the bar' – paying whatever is necessary to have the bar to themselves and drink as much as they want.[122] Spending time in Tanjung Priok, which is known for its criminal gangs of thugs (*preman*), many of the boys develop a tough look. The Boneoge boys themselves claim to be safe because they are known to the gangs since they drink together, and because the Butonese themselves have a reputation for being tough *preman*.[123]

After getting a placement, the employee then departs by plane to wherever the ship will next come to port (often Hawaii). Once aboard, he must quickly learn

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[122] During a visit to these dormitories in 2003, I got an impression of their lifestyle in Jakarta: the houses were packed with young men sleeping on the floor or playing dominos in groups (just as older men do on the beach in Boneoge), waiting to be given a contract. Days were often spent at the agents' offices, nights spent drinking. At the time it was very difficult to obtain placements, because the high profile of the SARS disease in Southeast Asia made the Japanese anxious about hiring from the region, and some of the men had been waiting unsuccessfully in Jakarta for a year.

[123] As a Hawaii boy explained to me, 'the big man at Tanjung Priok, Ongen Sangaji, respects Butonese people'.

how to work in the required manner, including understanding basic commands in Japanese (or English, depending on the ship's origin). Work is in shifts around the clock, with little rest if there are fish to be caught. The catch is picked up by another ship, so the fishing boats can stay at sea for six months at a time before going to port. Port visits are for two to four days, and follow the pattern of sailors' visits to port everywhere: in the pursuit of pleasure. As one informant put it, 'all Hawaii boys drink and whore, there are no exceptions'.

The work is very arduous, involving hard physical labour, long working hours, and no escape from the working environment. The stress of being at sea for months at a time without coming to port is intense. My neighbour told me 'the first time I went, I was at sea for a year before coming to port – you almost go crazy. Some people throw themselves into the sea'. Apart from the hard work and isolation, discipline from the captain and crew is another risk; Boneoge men spoke of beatings by the Japanese crew if they did not work properly. This is one reason that the boys practice at their dormitory in Tanjung Priok; as one informant said, 'if you know how to work, you won't be harassed'. One Hawaii boy lost his job because, he said, he was defending his cousin (who was on the same ship) from beatings by his superiors.

After two years of such work, or whenever the contract expires, the man disembarks in port and flies back to Jakarta, waiting there for a couple of weeks until receiving his final pay from the agent. Then he returns to Boneoge for a holiday, until he wants to go to Hawaii again. Because of the difficulty and expense of arranging contracts, many men now make arrangements directly with the ship captain to return immediately for another contract. Returning to work on the same ship removes the need for a bribe to the agent, since the ship's captain requests that the agent give the man a contract. The consequence of returning to the same ship is that the man may only be able to take a few weeks off. Some men have thus spent six years at sea (three two-year contracts) with a total of only six weeks in Boneoge during this time.

The Hawaii migrations are said to have begun through the involvement of a Boneoge man, La Ode Suha, with the company PT Tofiko which was set up in the early 1970s in Ambon. La Ode Suha had a close working relationship with a Tofiko manager, and this allowed him to place some Boneoge men in jobs on

Tofiko ships fishing within Indonesian waters. Eventually (some time around 1987-1990), La Ode Suha was asked to find men for jobs on the ships going overseas. La Ode Suha's nephew La Ode Taate helped by finding Boneoge youth to take the jobs, but he says this was difficult at first. Being an unproven migration, people were suspicious and few were willing to go. I quote from La Ode Taate's account:

> These days young people now only want to work if there are proven results. They don't like risks. In 1990 I was looking for hundreds to send on the Hawaii boats, but I could only get four, by forcing them.[124] Their parents were angry with me, but after 16 months their sons came back with 40 million each.[125] For the second wave in 1994 they asked for three workers and 60 applied. My wife's brother wanted to sign up. I helped him by telling him the secret...if you pay 1.5 million to the agent he will put you on a ship ahead of other applicants. In 1997 most migrants from Boneoge were still going to Ambon. It was after the riots [of 1999] that more went to Hawaii. People used to accumulate capital in Ambon and then go to Papua. Now they get capital from Hawaii.

This story of pioneering a new migration for Boneoge men echoes familiar themes; brave pioneers taking risks, returning home with wealth, and spreading information about the migration so that others can take part. While most migrants prefer to follow established pathways, a few brave pioneers are needed to discover new niches. By about 1997, Hawaii migrations had become quite popular among Boneoge youth. Eventually the placement of employees on the ships was handled by agents in Jakarta, rather than in Ambon. The financial crisis beginning in 1997 made this migration even more desirable since the wages are paid in foreign currency; a wage of US$1000 increased sixfold in local currency due to the plunging rupiah. While much of the country was experiencing a financial crisis, Hawaii boys were getting rich; this sudden wealth led to a construction boom in Boneoge as they built new houses.

After the Ambon riots of 1999, when many hundreds of young men returned from Ambon and needed work, Hawaii came to be seen as definitely the best option; word of the Hawaii jobs spread throughout the Boneoge diaspora and a sudden increase in Hawaii applicants resulted. The number of applicants from

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[124] One of the four men who went on the first migration to Hawaii told me it was 1987.

[125] On another occasion he said Rp25 million; it is possible that he is misremembering due to the rapid changes in currency value since the 1997 economic crisis. The point is that it was a huge amount, enough to mark the migration as a terrific success.

other parts of Indonesia also increased, and competition became very intense. With increased competition, larger bribes are necessary, and salaries have declined dramatically. It is very difficult to find an agent offering US$1000/month now; many of the men are making about $US200 per month, and some salaries are reportedly as low as Sing$150 per month.[126] Hawaii boys claimed that the agents themselves enter a bidding war for contracts to provide workers to the ships, and then offer the Hawaii boys low salaries, keeping high profits for themselves. Although they resent this exploitation, most young Boneoge men still consider Hawaii to be their best migration option.[127]

From the above account, it can be seen that there is a high degree of intra-village cooperation in acquiring Hawaii jobs. The dormitories have been set up as a communal resource, and Boneoge men help their relatives and friends to get jobs by travelling to Jakarta with them, staying in the dormitories with them, training them, and sharing the secrets of dealing with the agents with them. Kin networks are important in raising the Rp5-8 million necessary for expenses during the application process. People from other villages have a hard time accessing Hawaii jobs without such networks of assistance. There is an important difference between this assistance and that provided to aspiring Ambon and Papua migrants in the past. In other migrations young men often depended on assistance from established older men who offered jobs in their trading or other enterprises, but now the young are assisting the young.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the rapid social change undergone by Boneoge people in the twentieth century, a transition from a lifestyle primarily based on

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[126] Hugo wrote in 1997 that there was a growing institutionalization of migration, with agents organizing people's migration experiences (1997: 99). The Indonesian Sailor's Cooperative (*Kumpulan Pelaut Indonesia*) does not appear to assist sailors in their dealings with agents; Hawaii boys told me it is weak and ineffective.

[127] There are now signs that Hawaii boys are looking for a new option. A few pioneers have jumped ship in Korea, and found very lucrative (by Boneoge standards) work on land. This might eventually lead to another migration pathway for Boneoge youth. One neighbour of mine left for Korea with an official working visa, which cost him Rp19 million (US$2100) to arrange. I was told that the agents had offered jobs on land in Australia, but the sign up fee was Rp20 million (US$2200). Boneoge men asked my advice on this as no one had yet tried it, and they were worried about being exploited. Before these options are proven, Hawaii is still the number one choice for most.

subsistence agriculture to one based on semi-nomadic sailing, to one of settled trading in urban centres such as Ambon. Trading is now the occupation of many and the aspiration of most. Boneoge people shifted from being a highland people to a coastal one, and many became urbanised during long term residence in Ambon and other cities. While it was primarily the people of Boneoge proper for whom the prominent post-war transition was from sailing (and itinerant fishing and farming) towards settled urban trading, those farmers who stayed in the hills until 1970 underwent a transition from farming to urban labouring. Experience living in ethnically mixed cities offered increased exposure to concepts of nationalism and to religious shifts such as the rise of modernist Islam. All of these changes have impacted upon the Boneoge status system.

Migration plays a central role in how Boneoge people pursue their aspirations; success (or *sukses*) is seen as existing outside of the village, to be found through migration. Boneoge migration is flexible and responsive to changes in political and economic conditions in the region. Pioneers are important in developing new migration options, and then kin networks are used to assist others in achieving successful migrations. Boneoge migration is thus characterised by similarity in migration pattern across villagers (hence the labelling of migration 'eras') but wide diversity across time periods, as new niches are found (and, incidentally, great diversity between villages). Throughout their travels, Boneoge migrants tend to retain close connection with Boneoge, if not by returning to the village itself then by staying in close contact with Boneoge diaspora communities elsewhere. The outward orientation, uniformity of migration aspirations and experiences, and anchoring to the Boneoge community combine to render Boneoge social life especially responsive to social change.

CHAPTER 4
SOCIAL STATUS

Social status is essential to Boneoge life, in a visible and quotidian way. Almost every social interaction depends heavily on the status of the interlocutors or, more accurately, on each interlocutor's perception of the other's status. The Boneoge social hierarchy is acknowledged in many ways in day to day life, and climbing up this social hierarchy is a major aspiration for most people. Boneoge social status depends on a number of different components, including wealth, age, Islamic reputation, and patronage networks. Some components of status have declined in importance, in that possessing them now brings less status than it did in the past; others have become increasingly important. This chapter describes social status in Boneoge and outlines these components. It also explores some of the ways in which social status is contested.

4.1 Status in Boneoge

High status brings many rewards: high regard by others, respect in social interactions, positions of honour at ceremonies and other gatherings, influence in familial and communal decision-making processes, and access to village leadership positions, both formal and informal. Those of high status are at the centre of Boneoge social, political, religious and economic life.

The importance of status is evident in norms governing social interaction between those of different status. Proper etiquette when around someone of higher status covers both non-verbal interaction (body language) and verbal interaction (speech modes). In terms of body language, one should, for example, maintain a calm and composed disposition, not engaging in any wild movements; not draw attention to oneself; not sit in a position higher than the high status person; and make sure to crouch low when walking past a seated high status person.

Norms for verbal interaction indicate a similar deference to high status people. When involved in group interaction, the high status person should be given the

floor, to take over and guide the conversation. He can expect polite attention from the others, without fear of being interrupted or cut off, and without fear of dissenting opinions.[128] Often the 'conversation' becomes a monologue, consisting not of an exchange of information or opinions, but of opinions or stories related by the high status person, often stories which seek to demonstrate his prowess or status (see later section). The audience should remain politely silent, even if they have contradictory opinions or know some of the facts to be false, perhaps simply injecting small motivators, such as 'oh, it's like that, is it'.[129] Challenging the opinions or stories would be taken as a claim to (at least) equal status with the speaker. Similarly, if a lower status person were to speak at length, then the higher status person might respond by either completely ignoring the speech, or by interrupting and contradicting it. To listen submissively would be to indicate his own low status.

Observing the proper behaviour rules when near someone of high status is referred to as 'respecting' them, but also as 'fearing' them. To 'fear' someone of high status refers not to a weakness to be overcome with courage, but rather to the exhibition of the proper deferential behaviour which indicates acceptance of their high status. This tendency to speak of respect as 'fear' is discussed further in Chapter 8.

These norms for social interaction between those of different status have implications for decision-making processes. It is difficult for those of low status to contradict their superiors. This means that the high status people have a large influence over political decisions in the village. Boneoge is officially governed by a village head (*lurah*), and a number of lower level administrative leaders. Informally, though, a small group of high status villagers plays an important role in village decisions. I call this group 'the Executive'. Norms of status respect underpin the form of political rule by this group. Communal decisions at village meetings often involve the community simply rubber stamping the decision already taken by the Executive in a closed meeting prior to the village gathering;

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[128] I use the masculine pronoun here since, when I observed this kind of interaction, it was usually with respect to a high status man rather than a woman.

[129] Lineton observed a similar style of interaction in South Sulawesi: '[the Camat's] dogmatic style and his social manner...turned a social gathering into something approaching an audience by the Camat for his subordinates in which the Camat himself told stories and joked to a group of politely attentive and almost silent listeners' (1975a: 134).

norms mitigate against low status participation at village meetings, especially when the Executive already presents a united front.

The 2003 elections in Boneoge for neighbourhood heads (RT and RW leaders[130]) provided an example of the importance of status in decision-making. Much was made of the fact that the elections would be 'democratic', that is, every adult would vote for their desired RT or RW head. However, the democratic nature of the elections was undercut by the fact that the Executive pre-selected the three candidates who would be allowed to run in each neighbourhood. Furthermore, the results of the elections almost always favoured whoever amongst the three possessed higher status.[131]

A number of different terms are used to refer to people of high status in Boneoge, and in fact refer to different kinds of people. The most prominent Muna language terms for elites in Boneoge are *mieno nobhala* (BM: big person) and *kamokula* (BM: old person, elder), mirroring a dichotomy between 'big men' and 'wise men' which is found throughout the region.[132] The Indonesian terms used in Boneoge for these two types were *orang besar* (big person) and *orang tua* (old person). A *kamokula* has status because of age, traditional knowledge, morality, or leadership positions, whereas *orang besar* tends to refer to self-made men who have acquired wealth through trading. Many of Boneoge's high status people fall more into one of these two types than the other, although the terms are not mutually exclusive. The term *kamokula*, in particular, has a host of different meanings, which I will briefly describe shortly.

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[130] RT stands for *rukun tetangga*, and RW for *rukun warga*; they are the smallest levels of village administration, and are used throughout Indonesia. An RT might group 10-100 houses, and RW is the next level up, grouping a number of RT together.

[131] Interestingly, this method of choosing leaders, where a council of elders selects a small group of candidates, mirrors the method of selecting Sultans at the Wolio court. Beginning in the reign of Sultan La Elangi at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the *siolimbona* (council of elders of *walaka* rank) in Wolio selected three candidates for Sultan, with the winner being determined by various mystical tests (Yunus 1995: 123).

[132] Winn (2003: 69), for example, discusses a similar distinction between *orang besar* (big man) and *orang tua* (elder) in the Banda Islands, with the *orang besar* being known for wealth and political influence, and the *orang tua* for knowledge, age, exemplary behaviour and moral authority.

Big men, or *miendo nobhala*,[133] are often referred to as those who have achieved '*sukses*', or those who are a '*bos*'. In Boneoge, the idea of *sukses* is strongly connected with the accumulation of money; you have to be wealthy to be considered to have achieved *sukses*. But there are other necessary, and equally important, social requirements, relating to religion, autonomy, political influence, and patronage for example.[134] '*Bos*' can be used to refer to a patron who provides clients with employment, protection, and other services in return for loyalty and labour, but it can also be used to refer to a mere employer.[135] At times the term is used much more broadly to refer to anyone of some status, and as a respectful but informal (and often semi-humorous) honorific.[136]

Those who are known as *miendo nobhala* in Boneoge are mostly rich traders, who began with little but gradually built up trading empires through years of migrating to towns in eastern Indonesia. They have all undertaken the Muslim pilgrimage, provide employment and other assistance for young relatives and friends, and are tightly linked into the Boneoge community. The concept of *sukses* which is used to describe them denotes a particular version of high status, one to which most young Boneoge people aspire (see Chapter 5). The village head is also considered a *miendo nobhala*, although one who is below the status of the *haji* traders.

The term *kamokula* is a very significant one in Boneoge, and is key to understanding Boneoge notions of hierarchical relations, status and respect. The term is complex partly because it is contextual; it has a number of quite different meanings, with the intended one usually clear from the context. The term is also relational, in that it applies to the relation between two people rather than to an individual person in an absolute sense. That is, since both age and status are

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[133] *Mieno nobhala* is the singular 'big man'; *miendo nobhala* is the plural 'big men'. Although technically the terms are gender neutral, in practice it is men who are referred to in this way, and since 'big man' is a well known concept, I will continue to use the masculine forms.

[134] The Indonesian word *berhasil* ('succeed') is also used to refer to this concept of '*sukses*'. The word *sukses* has even crept into the local Muna language, perhaps because it has come to mean something not adequately covered by Muna terms. This is one hint that it describes a newer 'type' of high status person than does '*kamokula*'.

[135] See Acciaioli (2000), Pelras (2000) and Meereboer (1998) on how the term *bos* is used in South Sulawesi.

[136] It is also possible to describe high status people (usually men) by saying that 'he has a name' or 'he has a big name' (*dia punya nama, dia punya nama besar*, BM: *nokoneamo, nobhalamo neanoa*). This is more often used to refer to someone who is well known and has political power, than to a wise but less politically engaged person.

relative, a person can be a *kamokula* to certain individuals and not to others. In Boneoge *kamokula* refers to three main categories of people: first, those who are old, or at least significantly older than the speaker (and also to one's parents); second, leaders or others of high status; and third, those with knowledge in the realm of *adat*, healing, or other traditional arenas such as fishing magic.[137] These three groups often coincided in the past, but have now become increasingly separate, as this thesis will show. I will explain each of the three categories in turn.

Age considerations are integral to status calculations in Boneoge; both generational difference and seniority within a generation are extremely important in knowing how to treat someone. 'Parent' is perhaps the most basic meaning of *kamokula*, as is the case with the Indonesian '*orang tua*'.[138] It is clear that this meaning is intended when the speaker uses a possessive pronoun ('my *kamokula*'). '*Kamokula*' can also be used to refer to (or to address) someone a generation older than the speaker, showing the relative aspect of the term. The term can also be used to refer to the older generation in general (in Indonesian they would say '*orang-orang tua*'), meaning everyone over about age 50, in contrast to the 'younger generation' (*anak muda*; BM: *na'i mo'ane*).[139]

Kamokula can also be used to refer to village leaders such as the *lurah* (village head), the *Imam* (the highest ranking Islamic official in the village), the head of the LPM (*Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, or Village Empowerment Council), and the two neighbourhood heads (*kepala lingkungan*) of Boneoge. In fact the term can be used to refer to just about anyone of high

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[137] The Muna dictionary gives six definitions for *kamokula*: 1) parent; 2) someone substantially older than the speaker; 3) the older generation in general; 4) village leaders; 5) particular elders who are knowledgeable about *adat* matters ('*adat* leaders'); and 6) *bhisa* (BM: shaman/healers) (van den Berg 1996). This corresponds very well with what I observed in Boneoge, although while the dictionary lists 'village leaders', I found the term to be applied more widely to almost anyone of high status. As a comparison, Errington (1989: 206) states that 'the Buginese term *ToMatoa* and the Javanese *wong tuwa*, literally 'old person', can denote also a person who is a generational layer or two senior to the speaker, a person who is respected, a noble person, and a spiritually potent person'. This shows close similarity with the meanings of *kamokula*.

[138] I have the sense that Muna speakers tend to mean '*kamokula*' when they say '*orang tua*'. That is, although '*orang tua*' is close in meaning to '*kamokula*', the latter term is imbued with much local meaning, and this meaning tends to be carried into Indonesian usage of the former term. For this reason I will use *kamokula* in quotes given in Indonesian where the speaker used '*orang tua*'.

[139] *Na'i* is a shortened form of *kanaana'i* (BM: children). *Mo'ane* is 'male' or 'man'. The phrase *na'i mo'ane* means 'young men', but it is this phrase which is used when speaking of the younger generation in contrast to the older generation.

status, or anyone deserving of respect (and since status is relative, the use of the term *kamokula* in this context is also relative). This means that even *miendo nobhala* can be referred to as *kamokula*, as an acknowledgement of their high status. This confusing usage is perhaps a leftover of a time when leadership positions, wealth, *adat* knowledge, and age tended to coincide in elites more than they do today.

Finally, the term can also refer to those who are known for their knowledge of Boneoge *adat* (custom) and mystical arts. This includes those with knowledge of life cycle rituals, farming rituals, healing arts, and other forms of magic. Also included are those seen as possessing general wisdom about life. Other ways of referring to such people include '*tokoh adat*' (*adat* leaders) for those with knowledge of *adat*, and for those with knowledge of healing or other forms of magic, *dukun* (BM: *bhisa*) or *orang pintar* (clever people).[140] People in this third category are generally old plus have specific types of knowledge, and can be referred to as 'elders', in the sense of 'wise old people'.

This introduction to the terminology of status in Boneoge has focused on *miendo nobhala* and *kamokula*, two poles of status and power in Boneoge, with *miendo nobhala* representing worldly power and wealth, and *kamokula* representing inner knowledge, spiritual potency, and mystical power, all of which can be glossed as '*ilmu*'. The concept of '*kamokula*' is more deeply embedded in the social structure and cosmology of the region than is '*miendo nobhala*'. Many stories convey the point that *kamokula* could become big men if they wanted to, but they humbly reject wealth and worldly positions.[141] *Kamokula* also seem to have more durability than *miendo nobhala*. It is possible for a big man to become 'small' if he loses his wealth and position, but an old man rarely becomes 'young', since the mystical knowledge and morality of the *kamokula* tend to be retained.

This distinction between big men and old men, however, is an oversimplification; many people of high status do not fit perfectly into either the big man or the old man model. Rather, each of these types can be broken down

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[140] In order to avoid confusion about which meaning of the term *kamokula* is intended, I will generally avoid using it, instead specifying the English equivalent of the intended meaning.

[141] For instance, in one story about a *kamokula* called Sangia Wambulu, he was offered titles and offices but he refused, saying 'I want to be rewarded in the afterlife, not in this life'.

further into components, characteristics which are important for high status in Boneoge and which are found in various combinations in different individuals. The next section describes these characteristics.

In most cases Boneoge people acknowledge and concur on who is of higher status, meaning that there is a fairly clear and agreed upon hierarchy of people. However, processes of contestation and change are also integral to the status system. Contestation of the status hierarchy, for example when people make contentious claims about status positions, is partly enabled by the fact that there are multiple determinants of status; someone may possess more of one and someone else more of another, leading each to consider themselves superior. That is, people may disagree on which components are more important in establishing high status.

In understanding processes of change, we must distinguish between change in the position of individuals within the status system over time and change in the system itself. The former occurs when someone acquires more (or loses some) of one of the determinants of status and consequently moves up (or down) within the hierarchy, without challenging the assumptions on which it rests. The latter occurs when particular status determinants decline or increase in relative value (in the opinion of a sufficient portion of society), signalling a change in the determinants of status.

In the next section, I explore the determinants of social status in Boneoge. I also begin to describe changes in the relative importance of these determinants, although it is mostly left to later chapters to more fully trace these changes.

4.2 Determinants of Status

A number of characteristics are important for status in Boneoge, including: rank (membership in the nobility), the holding of leadership positions, the possession of *adat* knowledge, the possession of wealth, adherence to Islam, age, gender, membership in kinship and patronage networks, autonomy, and newer determinants such as level of education and holding a government job. In the following account of each of these characteristics, I devote relatively more attention to particular ones which have declined in importance, such as rank,

holding village office, and the possession of *adat* knowledge, since the other characteristics are each explored more fully in later chapters.[142]

4.2.1 Rank

Rank structured the social organisation of the Wolio Sultanate (which lasted from 1540 until 1960). As explained in Chapter 1, each person belonged to one of four categories (Schoorl 2003), including *kaomu* (higher aristocrats), *walaka* (lower aristocrats), *papara* (commoners), and *batua* (slaves) (Rudyansjah 1997). The last category declined in importance when the Dutch outlawed slavery, a process which was mostly complete by 1906 (Schoorl 2003: 9).[143] The high status of the noble ranks was marked in a number of ways, including name, location of residence, customs (notably bride price) and behaviour, language, and religious knowledge.

Members of the *kaomu* class are recognisable by the use of '*La Ode*' for men and '*Wa Ode*' for women, before their personal names. A child inherits the estate of its father, not its mother, and under Sultanate rules it was forbidden for women to marry below their own estate on pain of death (Schoorl 2003: 225). Both the *kaomu* and the *walaka* lived in the *keraton*, the fortified centre of the Wolio sultanate, and all official offices of the sultanate were reserved for members of these two ranks. Only *kaomu* people were eligible to become Sultan, and the Sultan was chosen by a council of *walaka* people. There were also two in-between ranks, the *analalaki*[144] (BW) and *limbo* (BW); the literature gives several different opinions about the exact nature of these ranks.[145]

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[142] Although not discussed here, status differences are acknowledged not just between individuals but also between communities. For instance, the communities of Matoka and Kampung Baru are of lower status than Boneoge proper, for a host of reasons. As a result, people from Matoka and Kampung Baru tend to avoid spending time in Boneoge proper, and act with respectful deference when they do (see Chapter 7).

[143] The system of ranks may not have been present in this form in the early years of the Sultanate, but appears to have been established during the rule of the 4th Sultan, La Elangi, also known as Sultan Dayanu Ikhsanuddin (1597-1633) (Yunus 1995: 24). Still, it is likely that such a system of social stratification could be traced to Hindu ideology in the pre-Islamic Butonese polity.

[144] *Analalaki* means something like 'child of *kaomu*', since *lalaki* is a synonym for *kaomu* (Yunus 1995: 25), and *ana* is 'child'.

[145] Schoorl's description of the rank system is as follows. *Kaomu* are descended from the first Wolio ruler Wakaakaa, on the father's side; *walaka*, also called *maradika*, are 'descended on the father's side from founders of the sultanate of Buton'; *papara* are 'village inhabitants', also called *adat* slaves; slaves (*batua*) were the fourth rank (before the Dutch outlawed slavery), and were found in the centre and in the villages. Of the intermediate ranks, *analalaki* are *kaomu* who misbehaved or failed in their obligations somehow; and *limbo* are *walaka* who misbehaved or

The *kaomu* and *walaka* took pride in having different *adat* (customs) from the *papara*. They had ceremonies which the *papara* did not have (such as the *dole-dole* (BW), a ritual bathing of *kaomu* children, and *kaombo* (BM), the sequestering of women between onset of menstruation and marriage (Schoorl 2003: 9)), a different language (they spoke Wolio, whereas the *papara* in the villages spoke one of several other Butonese languages), and stricter codes of proper behaviour (for instance, unmarried *kaomu* women were heavily shielded from the public eye until about 1950, holding a sarong over their head when they went out in public (ibid.: 221)). The hierarchy between ranks was also clearly expressed in the amount of bride price paid for a woman in each of these levels; this varied in accordance with the rank of the woman, with *kaomu* women

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failed in their obligations somehow (Schoorl 1994: 22). This account mostly follows Zahari (1977), a Wolio official serving in the final years of the Sultanate.

Yunus provides a more detailed account, which differs in some ways from Schoorl's. The origin of *kaomu* and *walaka* ranks can be traced back to the second ruler of Wolio, Bulawambona (who was the daughter of the first ruler, Wakaakaa) and her husband La Baluwu (the grandson of Sipanjonga, one of the pioneering immigrants who founded Wolio). The descendants of their child Bataraguru became the *kaomu* rank, while the descendants of their other children became the *walaka* rank. The *papara* rank consists of people who were living in the Wolio region but can not trace descent from Bulawambona, together with outsiders who voluntary settled in the Wolio territory and accepted the authority of the ruler. The *batua* rank consisted of *papara* who had to be forced to accept the authority of the Sultan, prisoners of war, people who were captured in slave raids or sold to members of the *kaomu* and *walaka* ranks, and people descended from *batua* fathers. *Kaomu* and *walaka* who moved away from the *keraton* and did not return had their status reduced under the 4th Sultan, Dayanu Ikhsanuddin (La Elangi); *kaomu* became *analalaki* and *walaka* became *limbo* (*limbo* was still higher than *papara*). *Kaomu isambali* are the children of *kaomu* men who lived outside the *keraton* and married a *papara* woman. Both *kaomu isambali* and *analalaki* lost their rights to hold *kaomu* offices (Yunus 1995: 25-27).

Rudyansjah argues that the system of ranks has been misinterpreted by Schoorl and others, and calls the system of *kaomu, walaka, papara, batua* a 'social structure based on a person's origins', where *kaomu* and *walaka* are 'Wolio people' and *papara* and *batua* are 'not Wolio people'. *Kaomu* are those who can trace their descent from founders of the Wolio kingdom (specifically the first ruler, Wakaakaa), while *walaka* are those who can trace their descent from founders of the Wolio community before the kingdom (such as Sipanjonga). Rudyansjah also covers a host of local claims about the meaning of *kaomu* and *walaka*, including that *kaomu* people are descended from Syarif Muhammad and Abdul Wahab, two descendants of the Prophet Muhammad who visited Buton to spread Islam. *Siolimbona* means 'nine villages', and refers to the nine villages which were located inside the walls of the *keraton*. *Siolimbona* is associated with the *walaka* rank, since the leaders of those nine villages were *walaka* men (the ones who formed the *siolimbona* council which selects the Sultan (Schoorl 2003: 23-4)). *Papara* are outsiders to Wolio, people who cannot trace their origins to the founders of either the kingdom or the Wolio community, and are the fishers and farmers living in the *kadié* (Butonese villages outside of the *keraton*). *Batua* were either prisoners of war or *papara* who were demoted due to not paying a debt or breaking *adat* rules (Rudyansjah 1997: 44-9).

Aside from the slightly different definitions of the ranks, then, the system seeks to separate genuine Wolio people (from the centre of the sultanate) from others. Members of the aristocratic ranks are associated with the centre of the sultanate (i.e. the centre of power in Buton) and claim precedence in the region. These factors are both important in Butonese notions of status.

fetching the highest bride price. Finally, knowledge of Islam and Wolio *adat* was not shared freely throughout the Sultanate but conserved in the centre (ibid.: 243); possessing such knowledge was another sign of high status. Nobles who lived in villages such as Boneoge enjoyed high status (and in many cases held official positions as representatives of the Sultanate).

Most people in villages like Boneoge, during the time of the Sultanate (i.e. before 1960), were commoners, although a few nobles would generally be present. When I was in Boneoge, people did not use the terms *walaka* and *papara*. Slaves were acknowledged as having existed in the past, as a part of the household of 'La Ode people' (i.e. *kaomu*). The commonly mentioned levels were nobles (i.e. *kaomu*), *analalaki*, *siolimbona*, and commoners ('*orang biasa*', i.e. *papara*). Although people gave varying definitions of *analalaki* and *siolimbona*, it appears that *analalaki* were *kaomu* who had been away from the *keraton* for generations (corresponding to Yunus' definition of *analalaki*, see earlier footnote),[146] and *siolimbona* meant either *walaka* or *walaka* who had been away from the *keraton* for generations (corresponding to Yunus' definition of *limbo*).[147] Both of these levels were acknowledged as being higher than commoners, and lower than *kaomu* – and this ranking was confirmed by the amount of bride price needed to marry a woman of each level.[148] In Boneoge,

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[146] Boneoge informants gave slightly different interpretations of *analalaki*, varying between a demoted *kaomu* because of being away from the *keraton* for a long time (corresponding to Yunus' *analalaki*), a demoted *kaomu* because of marrying a *papara* woman (corresponding to Yunus' *kaomu isambali*), and a child of a *papara* man and a *kaomu* woman. In the third case, due to patrilineal inheritance of rank, this child would be *papara*, but this type of marriage was prohibited on pain of death. Couvreur (2001[1935]) does list this last type in his description of ranks in the Kingdom of Muna, but calls it La Ode *we sembali* (which is the Muna language equivalent of the Wolio expression *kaomu isambali*). I favour the first explanation, where *analalaki* is a long-departed *kaomu*.

[147] The term *siolimbona* is associated with the *walaka* rank, since the *siolimbona* council was comprised of leaders called '*bonto*' leaders, who were of *walaka* rank. One Boneoge informant said that a *siolimbona* can become a *bonto*, suggesting that the term *siolimbona* means *walaka*. But *siolimbona* in Boneoge might refer to *limbo* (demoted *walaka* who had left the *keraton*), since Boneoge people did acknowledge the class of *analalaki* for demoted *kaomu*. Informants in Boneoge also suggested that *siolimbona* was the child of a *kaomu* woman and a *papara* man, or a *kaomu* who has left the *keraton*, both of which seem unlikely since the first is just *papara* (see previous footnote) while the second is *analalaki*.

[148] Bride price is primarily determined by the position of the woman, but can be influenced by the relative position of the man. The bride price is calculated in *bhoka* (BM), a traditional measure which is now calculated at Rp12,000 per *bhoka* in Boneoge. The bride price in Boneoge for *kaomu* women was 115 *bhoka*, 32 *bhoka* for the *analalaki* and *siolimbona* classes, and 24 *bhoka* for commoners. The *analalaki* level used to be 45 *bhoka*, it was explained to me, but this was reduced to make it equivalent to *siolimbona*. This suggests that *analalaki* is indeed a higher rank than *siolimbona*.

about 5% of people are *kaomu* (high nobles), an unknown (but probably similar) number are *analalaki* or *siolimbona*, and the rest of the population are 'common people' (*orang biasa*).

Since the abolishment of the Sultanate in 1960, however, this system of rank has lost much of its importance throughout Buton. In Boneoge, relations between those of different rank are not particularly marked, *kaomu* families rarely push their daughters to marry within the *kaomu* rank (if a *kaomu* woman marries outside of the *kaomu* rank, her children will not inherit her *kaomu* status), and men can marry women of higher rank without threat of execution.[149] In addition, many nobles have low status occupations such as subsistence fishing, use of the Wolio language is not an important status marker, religious knowledge is not restricted to the nobility, and nobles are far surpassed in wealth and status by numerous traders from the commoner ranks.

However, a few remnants of the rank system do remain. Boneoge people who have *Ode* in their name are accorded slightly higher status in some contexts, and higher bride prices reflect this. The *Ode* people are granted a measure of respect due to their perceived past association with the *keraton*, but this component of status is now easily overshadowed by other components to be discussed below. One sign of this is that an *Ode* who goes on the pilgrimage might drop the *Ode* and take on a new Muslim name, signifying that the new status achieved as a *haji* is much more important than being a noble.

The reduction in importance of the rank system is due to a number of inter-related factors such as the abolition of the Sultanate in 1960; a decline in traditional ceremonies which reinforced the rank system; a rise in egalitarian ideology supported by modernist Islam and the new nationalist ideology; processes of migration through which Butonese people came to mix with other Indonesians in eastern Indonesian cities; and new economic opportunities which allowed many commoners to rise far above nobles in wealth. These factors will all be discussed further in later chapters.

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[149] In Boneoge, a non-noble man cannot formally propose to a *kaomu* woman, but he can elope with her, through the institution of *bawa lari* (eloping), wherein the woman is taken from her house to the Imam's house and left there for several days (while her family is notified), after which the marriage takes place.

4.2.2 Leadership positions

In Boneoge, being a village leader, or having been a leader, entitles one to a high degree of status (and conversely, having high status may entitle one to become a leader). Schoorl describes 'respect for current and past leaders' as a quintessentially Butonese characteristic (1994: 29). These leaders are seen to have offered service to the population at large, to have worked for the greater good, and to be deserving of eternal respect for that role. This is seen as a fundamental aspect of being Butonese, and is enshrined in the *Sarana Wolio*, a document written by Sultan M. Idrus (1824-1851) which lays out the ideology of the Sultanate.[150] According to Schoorl, encouraging respect for past office-holders acted as a mechanism for building loyalty in the *kadié* (villages) towards the centre (2003: 88), in a Sultanate where the villages had considerable autonomy. The attitude of obedience to, and respect for, leaders was supported by the ideology of the Sufist *tarekat* Khalwatiyaah Sammaniyyah, which was followed by the Wolio Sultans during the 19th century (Yunus 1995: viii, 109). In any case the importance of leadership positions in determining status necessitates an outline of political authority in Boneoge.

Under the Sultanate, Boneoge was a *kadié*, a semi-autonomous village, which rendered tribute to the Sultan as a sign of submission to his authority (Zahari 1977: 84). Each *kadié* was officially ruled by a representative of the Sultanate but governed by a local council of leaders. The form of this local council varied between *kadié*. According to village informants, the official leader of Boneoge was the *kolakino Bone* (BM; BW: *lakina Bone*), a representative (and resident) of the Wolio keraton. The highest ranking local resident was referred to as the *kolakino Boneoge*. Underneath him were two councils, called the *Sara* and the

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[150] An excerpt from the *Sarana Wolio*, which I quote here from Schoorl (1994: 29), not only emphasises the importance of service and leadership, but also indicates that morality and piety are important for status, and that status should be recognised with praise, leadership roles, gifts, and respect:

> 'There are different reasons for being venerated and praised: because of greatness of spirit; because of piety; because of skills which may be valuable for the entire kingdom, and for other reasons also. In brief, those people who are honoured are those who have wrought some good for the whole kingdom. There are different ways of showing our gratitude, for example, in praising someone for these things, by appointing or raising to a certain function or office, by giving gifts or by showing respect and honour. Such a show of honour is the whetstone for the spirit of the people of Wolio, that it grow not idle or enfeebled, that it remain ever mighty, ever keen.'

Hukumu, each of which had a clear hierarchy of positions and responsibilities, with the *Sara* presiding over administrative matters and the *Hukumu* over religious ones.[151]

When the Dutch began ruling Buton more directly (probably following a treaty with Wolio in 1878), there was a Dutch-appointed District Head who ranked above the *kolakino Bone*. With the advent of the Indonesian state, and the abolition of the Sultanate in 1960, this administrative structure was superseded by the new Indonesian one, which now consists of *lurah* (village head), *camat* (sub-district head), *bupati* (district head), and *gubernor* (province head). The *Sara* council no longer exists in Boneoge. The *Hukumu* positions have persisted, with their functions being adapted to current notions of appropriate Islamic practices (see Chapter 7), oriented around the mosque, prayers, funerals, and weddings. In 2000, Boneoge's status was upgraded from *desa* to *kelurahan*, which meant that it would be administered by a government-appointed *lurah* (Village Head) rather by than a locally selected village head. In 2003 Boneoge was administratively sub-divided into *rukun tetangga* (RT) and *rukun warga* (RW), (belatedly) following the 1979 Village Government Law.[152]

The current leaders of Boneoge consist of the *lurah*, two 'neighbourhood heads' (*kepala lingkungan*), five officials who make up the LPM (Village Empowerment Council)[153] and, to a lesser degree, the RT and RW heads. In addition, an important leadership role is played by an informal council which I refer to as 'the Executive'. The Executive includes the *lurah*, neighbourhood

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[151] According to village informants, the *Sara* (BW, BM) council ran the day to day affairs of the village, liaised with the Sultanate of Wolio, and made decisions regarding when to plant and when to harvest, while the *Hukumu* (BM, BW) council dealt with religious matters, including births, deaths, and protecting the village from spirit-caused or natural disasters. The Boneoge *Sara* consisted of 1 *parabhela bhalano*, 1 *sanangkolaki*, 1 *tunggu-tunggu*, 4 *parabhela*, 1 *wati*, and 1 *sandomie*; the *Hukumu* consisted of 1 *imam*, 2 *hatibi*, 1 *modi analalaki*, 4 or 5 *modi*, 1 *modino katuko*, and 1 *tungguno ganda* (*mokimu*). Note that this account of the Boneoge political structure is from Boneoge elders. According to Zahari, however, Boneoge had 1 *parabela ogena*, 3 *parabela*, and 4 *wati* (1977: 84). Zahari also mentions the Lakina Boneoge as the Sultanate's representative, and does not mention the Lakina Bone (ibid.: 55). Note that *parabhela bhalano* is the *bahasa* Muna equivalent of the bahasa Wolio *parabela ogena* (these are titles and can not be readily translated).

[152] Boneoge was divided into 9 RTs. These RTs were grouped together to form about 5 RWs. For definitions of RTs and RWs see footnote in Section 4.1.

[153] The government had recently changed the name of this village council from LKMD (*Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa*, or Village Development Council) to LPM (*Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, or Village Empowerment Council) when I was in the field, but the new name had not fully caught on.

heads and LPM officials, as well as a number of other people who have status in the community and an interest in village affairs. Although these leaders are not particularly known for *adat* knowledge, or for being of noble rank, they do receive a high degree of respect for their leadership positions and service to the community. That is, while the qualifications for leadership have changed from the time of the Sara council, respect for leaders remains. Modernist Muslim credentials and knowledge of how to deal with (and extract resources from) the government have become important, while *adat* knowledge has become less so. Membership in a noble class is not necessary in order to hold a leadership position in Boneoge today, but descent from past leaders does remain an important supporting factor.[154]

Sara positions were semi-hereditary, not automatically descending to the eldest child. Upon the death of an incumbent, the elders of the village would choose a successor among those suitably close in descent (such as brothers, sons, or nephews of the deceased incumbent), using criteria of suitability (knowledge of *adat*, mystical abilities, oratorical skills, morality, leadership skills) to distinguish between candidates.[155] Semi-hereditary authority has persisted through the political changes in Boneoge; some descendants of *Sara* officials have been given leadership positions in the new political structure of the village. For example, the son of an important *adat* leader (the last *parabhela bhalano*) of Boneoge became village head in the 1960s, before being replaced by a military man during the New Order period. This son then migrated to Papua for 30 years, returning in the late 1990s and becoming leader of the LKMD, serving until 2002 (by which time it was called the LPM). In 2002, he was replaced as head of LPM by his own nephew, the grandson of the *parabhela ogena*. Several members of the Executive are descended from past village leaders.

The high status of leaders continues even after they have relinquished their posts. Their children, also, enjoy a measure of status due to their father's past position. With the Sara positions having been vacant for a half century, there are

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[154] It has been noted that in other parts of Sulawesi, nobles continued to be chosen as village heads after the Indonesian nation eclipsed traditional polities (for example see Lineton 1975a: 132), but this does not seem to have been the case in Boneoge.

[155] Leaders were selected not through a popular vote, but through a *musyawarah* (deliberation) in which high status people would exert disproportionate influence.

no living ex-*Sara* officials, but there are children of village heads. Having a close kinship relation with a leader (past or present) brings status, and such connections are frequently emphasized or articulated by Boneoge people. Descent from past leaders, however, is not in itself sufficient to guarantee high status in Boneoge society, just as in the past it was not sufficient to guarantee inheriting an office. One must possess additional qualities in order to achieve high status.

As in the past, then, playing a leadership role in village affairs does accord status, but village leaders are no longer the highest status people in the village, having been superseded by people with extreme wealth and wide patronage networks, that is, by *miendo nobhala*. The *miendo nobhala* are also respected for being of service to the community, just as past leaders were. The difference is that while past leaders provided service through physical and mystical protection of the village, *miendo nobhala* offer patronage and jobs.

4.2.3 *Adat* knowledge

The knowledge of *adat* possessed by *adat* leaders provides them with power and status. The term 'knowledge' may be misleading; notions of the nature of this knowledge bear more similarity to concepts of spiritual potency and mystical power than to knowledge which can be studied from books. Acquiring it requires certain moral qualities (such as discipline, humility, and integrity) as well as natural ability (sometimes acquired through descent), diligence, and a good teacher. Given these mystical aspects it is more appropriate to refer to this knowledge (as Boneoge people do) as *ilmu* (BM: *ilimiu*).

Certain types of *ilmu* remain important in Boneoge, with status awarded to those who possess them. But several other types of *ilmu* have become less sought after in recent times, and this has led to a decline in the status of the *adat* leaders possessing such *ilmu*.

Some of the roles carried out in the past by the *Sara* leaders are still needed in Boneoge today, such as knowing auspicious dates for marriages and other risky endeavours, negotiating bride price arrangements, settling land disputes, choosing when to plant and harvest, and overseeing rituals to see that they are implemented properly. There are particular elders in Boneoge who carry out

these functions, although they no longer have an official role or title. They are referred to as *ketua adat* (*adat* leader), *kamokulano liwu* (village elder), or simply *kamokula*. They are usually descended from *Sara* or *Hukumu* members. These men do accrue status from this role, and from their *ilmu*, but nothing like to the degree that they would have in times past when those who performed these roles would also have been the political leaders of the village.

As will be discussed in later chapters, a number of ceremonies which depended on *kamokula ilmu* have come to be seen as inappropriate or in contradiction to (modernist) Islam, and have either been modified, de-emphasised or discontinued. These include border fortification ceremonies which blockade the village so that malevolent spirits can not enter, sequestering ceremonies for virgins (*pingitan*, BM: *kaombo*), and a host of other rituals. The decline in demand for such *ilmu* has meant that possessing it no longer brings high status (see Chapter 8).

The *bahasa* Muna term *bhisa* (*dukun* in Indonesian) can be used to describe people who possess certain types of *ilmu*, such as that relating to healing or control of spirits. There are a number of types of *bhisa* in Boneoge, including *bhisano kafoago* (BM: healers), *bhisano kanainai* (BM: *traditional midwives*), *pahika* (BM: *dukun* of fishing) and *bhisano kaampo* (BM: *dukun* of gardens). All of these *bhisa* are often referred to simply as *kamokula* (or *orang tua* in Indonesian).[156] None of these *bhisa* has particularly high status in Boneoge today, and neither do they hold positions of political power.

Bhisano kafoago (healers) tend to be old men or women, and can be summoned to deal with any ailment. They generally use medicinal plants, breath (blowing), or sacred (blessed) water in order to heal patients. Many Boneoge people continue to use *bhisano kafoago*, especially since using the more modern medical facilities at the community health centre (*puskesmas*) or the hospital in Baubau is considerably more expensive. There is also an informal referral system between these two realms of knowledge; the hospital in Baubau sometimes refers patients to '*kamokula*' (meaning healers), while for certain illnesses *bhisano kafoago* might tell people to go to the hospital. Certain *bhisano kafoago* in other

[156] For instance, if someone says 'my mother was sick, I had to call a *kamokula*', it is clear that they mean a *bhisano kafoago*, a healer.

villages have achieved high status due to renowned healing abilities, but in Boneoge the *bhisano kafoago* do not have high status.

Bhisano kanainai (traditional midwives) are typically old women (although I did find one example of a male), who oversee a woman's fertility following her marriage, assist in pregnancy and childbirth, and conduct all birth-related rituals. They remain important today (Alesich 2007), even though a government midwife lives in Boneoge and provides more modern medical services. The government midwife is more expensive than a *bhisano kanainai*, who often accepts payment by donation, so those lacking funds tend to use only the *bhisano kanainai*. Also, the *bhisano kanainai* provides services which a government midwife does not, relating to infertility cures and birth-related *adat* rituals. Although *bhisano kanainai* continue to be needed, they are not of high status, partly due to the increasingly prevalent trust in modern medicine and partly due to their identity as old women.

Pahika are now rare in Boneoge. There seems to be several causes for this. Fishing has declined as a primary occupation, with many people having shifted their priorities towards other pursuits. Also, the *pahika* is said to influence the catch through influencing the spirits of the sea. The dominant version of Islam in the village now considers working through such spirits to be *syirik*, or idolatry, rendering the use of *pahika* less acceptable than in the past.[157]

Bhisano kaampo used to be very important when the village was more farming-oriented; in fact those who possessed the vital *ilmu* regarding *miendo wite* (BM: territorial spirits) and harvest auguries were the leaders of the *Sara* council, the administrative leaders of the village. Now, however, not only are *bhisano kaampo* not of high status, most Boneoge people do not know who they are. This is primarily because most Boneoge people no longer farm. In Kampung Baru, where some people still farm, *bhisano kaampo* remain important, and are responsible for carrying out farming-related ceremonies, and deciding where and when to plant and when to harvest. But even in Kampung Baru, the status of *bhisano kaampo* has declined as their role has weakened. Farming rituals are no

[157] *Syirik* beliefs are 'beliefs which are to be avoided on religious grounds' (Echols and Shadily 1989), such as idolatry. The term comes from the Arabic term *shirk*, which in the Qur'an 'refers to polytheism in general and to the worship of idols in particular' (Woodward 1989: 216).

longer whole-village affairs, but are held secretively, with smaller audiences, due to the new dominance of a modernist Islam discourse in Boneoge which views these rituals as inappropriate.

Many of these forms of *bhisa ilmu* have fallen in popularity, and young people rarely seek to learn them. To some degree *bhisa*, and even *kamokula* more generally, are associated with 'traditional' practices and knowledge, which are often seen in a negative light by those who adhere to modernist Islam. The decline in the value of (certain forms of) *adat* knowledge, then, has been connected to the rise of modernist Islam, the move away from farming, and increased availability of modern medicine. Migration has offered new non-agricultural opportunities, and urbanised migrants have come to de-emphasise local aspects of their religious practice in favour of more regionally shared notions of Islam.

4.2.4 Wealth

The possession of wealth is an extremely important component of status in Boneoge. Most people, especially the young, describe their life ambition as being to achieve *sukses*, of which the achievement of wealth is an important part. A host of very visible signs differentiate who is wealthy and who is not in Boneoge, and disparities in wealth are extreme.

Perhaps the most immediate and visible sign of wealth is one's house. Boneoge people who have obtained wealth, usually either through trading in Ambon or Papua, or by working in Hawaii, often build multi-storey concrete houses, which stand out against the small wooden stilt houses of their neighbours. Even a small concrete house is a sign of wealth, compared to small huts with woven bamboo walls. Other examples of conspicuous consumption include television sets and stereo systems (vehicles are less common, perhaps since most wealthy people spend most of their time away from the village). Holding large ceremonies also serves as a display of wealth. Large weddings are spoken about with awe, with rumours quickly spreading concerning how many cattle were slaughtered and how many guests were invited. Wealth is also displayed when people undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca, given the high costs involved (about US$4000 per person). Undertaking the pilgrimage brings status

not just due to religious achievement but also due to the wealth which the trip signifies. One wealthy *haji* trader in Boneoge goes on the pilgrimage regularly, each time funding a group of relatives and employees to accompany him, and this has greatly contributed to his status in the village. Wealth is also demonstrated by travelling, since it is expensive. A person can demonstrate substantial wealth by frequently travelling, for instance visiting relatives in Ambon, Papua, or Jakarta.

Wealth is also used to build patronage networks (to be discussed shortly). This can be done through giving money or goods to relatives and friends, by paying costs incurred when together with other people, or by offering loans as start up capital for aspiring traders, who will be indebted both financially and morally to the lender. These transactions place the borrower in a patron-client relation with the lender, where the borrower must recognise the higher status of the lender.

Wealth seems to have a positive impact on status regardless of where the money came from; that is, Boneoge people do not seem to make moral judgments condemning of the source of anyone's wealth. Wealth alone, however, is not enough to achieve high status; whether a wealthy person has high status depends on other, social, characteristics. Wealth creates social obligations towards friends and relatives, and failure to live up to these can result in a negative moral judgment and concomitant loss of status.[158] Once when I commented to a group of men on the size and splendour of a newly built concrete house in the village, in the midst of much smaller and simpler wooden houses, one of the men responded that the owner is 'tight with money'; he drinks with us, the man said, but he doesn't pay his share (the wealthy house owner would be expected to pay more than his fair share, in fact, when drinking with less wealthy people). The speaker was criticising the man for abrogating his social responsibilities in order to save money and build a large house. In general, though, the wealthy seem to take their social responsibilities very seriously, and thus tend to achieve status in the village due not only to their wealth but also to

[158] Similarly, Guinness notes that in a Javanese urban neighbourhod, higher position entails 'moral obligations and responsibilities towards those of lower status' (1986: 180).

their patronage connections. Chapter 5 elaborates on this discussion of wealth and status in Boneoge.

4.2.5 Islam

Adherence to Islam has been a part of Butonese identity since the inception of the Wolio Sultanate in the sixteenth Century, and Islamic identity continues to be an important part of being Butonese. Religious authority and political authority were tightly linked in the Wolio Sultanate,[159] and Islamic knowledge tended to be conserved in the centre of the Sultanate, used as a tool by the noble class to retain their power over the lesser nobles and the commoners in the villages (Schoorl 2003: 147-50). The ability to acquire Islamic knowledge, then, also signalled proximity to the centre of Sultanate power where this Islamic knowledge was conserved. As in other parts of Indonesia, modernist Islam has been on the rise in Buton over the past decades, during which adherence to the 'five pillars' has increased alongside a proliferation of outward signs of piety. Today, the association between 'proper' Islam and status remains strong, and political and social elites are careful to cultivate an image of pious Muslim identity.[160]

The Muslim identity of Boneoge is immediately apparent, and Islamic events form the core of Boneoge social life. All Boneoge people are Muslim, and Muslim identity is very important both in Boneoge and in Buton in general. In Boneoge, many of my neighbours (particularly the men) attended prayers at the mosque for all five sessions each day. The mosque is the pride of the village, rebuilt in 2000 with money collected throughout the Boneoge diaspora communities (Jakarta, Ambon, and so on); its splendour rivals that of the large mosque in the district capital of Baubau. Muslim ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, and prayer sessions for departing pilgrims are frequent and well-attended. Every afternoon and evening, groups of children study the Koran at various Koranic schools (TPA, *Taman Pendidikan al-Qur'an)* in the village. The

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[159] During the Sultanate's history 'the political centre of the kingdom also acted as the cultural and religious centre....the kingdom could function as a political centre because it also was the cultural and religious centre' (Schoorl 2003: 147-9).

[160] During the 1990s Southeast Sulawesi had the highest percentage of Muslims of any province in the country (Tirtosudarmo 1997: 361). There has only been slight Christian influence in Buton, with small scale missionary work in a few villages, such as Lolibu in Lakudo sub-district.

fasting month of Ramadhan is the most important time of the year - most people in the village seem to fast and attendance at the extra *taraweh* evening prayer is high.[161] The Lebaran celebration, at the end of Ramadhan, is the biggest festive occasion of the year. Many who migrate to Ambon and Papua return to Boneoge for Ramadhan and Lebaran, and the population of the village can double at this time. Other important Islamic events include *Idul Qurban* (*Idul Adha*), which involves the sacrificing of cows and goats, with the meat donated by those who are able to do so in order to be distributed to the poor of the village.

In Boneoge, having a reputation for strict observance of Islamic strictures augments one's status. Signs of personal piety which can contribute to this positive Islamic reputation include praying at the mosque five times per day, fasting during the fasting month, frequently wearing Islamic garb (usually a sarong, formal collared shirt, and a Muslim cap (*songko*)), being able to chant the Koran (*mengaji*) skilfully, ensuring one's children study the Koran, and hosting frequent prayer gatherings at one's house.

The Islamic observance which is most tightly connected with status, however, is the *hajj* pilgrimage. The high cost of going on the *hajj*, about US$4000 per person, means that only the very successful can afford it. It is known to be a deeply spiritual experience, the pinnacle of one's religious life. The entire village is aware of exactly who is departing on the *hajj* each year since a series of pre-departure prayer ceremonies are held, at which other villagers are invited to pray for their safe return. Upon completion of the *hajj*, pilgrims again hold prayer ceremonies with neighbours and relatives, to give thanks for their safe return. The returned pilgrim earns a new title, *haji* for men and *hajjah* for women, and may wear the white cap of a *haji*. Some returned pilgrims even change their personal names to Arabic ones in order to signal their new, post-pilgrimage identity. These signs all serve as markers of the elevated status which pilgrims enjoy because of their journey, which is seen to reflect both material and religious success.

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[161] An extra prayer during the holy month of Ramadhan, taking place after *solat isya*, at about 7:30pm.

Status is also implicated in the struggle between traditionalist and modernist Muslims in Boneoge. Religious views in Boneoge are diverse and not all individuals fit neatly into one of these categories. However, this distinction is relevant in one of the main disputes in Boneoge today: that concerning the legitimacy of spirit-based ceremonies which the modernists say are in contradiction with Islam, but which the traditionalists say are necessary for good harvests. The modernist view currently enjoys dominance in Boneoge, and this has many implications for status. This dispute is discussed further in Chapter 7, in order to reveal connections between status and religious change in Boneoge.

4.2.6 Age

Age is an important component of respect in Boneoge. One should respect one's elders, and this includes those much older (i.e. from the generation before) and even those only a little older, who are seen as 'older siblings'.

Relations between those of different generations are highly restricted by norms of respect, where the younger person is expected to be obedient and unobtrusive (in return elders are expected to provide protection, guidance and assistance). Using the term *kamokula* when referring to or addressing those a generation older than oneself serves as a reminder of their higher status. Respect for age is enforced by supernatural forces. Failing to showing respect towards elders can result in illness or misfortune, a naturally occurring punishment for someone who fails to heed the social hierarchy. Precedence is an important part of respect for age. That is, those who came from a previous generation to oneself deserve respect for this precedence, even if they happen to be younger.

Within one's own generation, relations are also marked by age status. Younger siblings must respect elder siblings, and these relations are extended to non-kin also, with anyone a few years older being referred to as an elder sibling and treated with respect. First meetings are often begun by determining relative age, since this is vital to calculations of status which then prescribe appropriate etiquette. Behavioural norms for treating elder siblings are not as restrictive, however, as the norms governing inter-generational interactions.

Other components which are important for status can outweigh age. That is, a young man might have very high status due to wealth, for example, and thus be

of much higher status than many older people. Nevertheless, he is likely to continue to treat his elders with respect. This sort of mismatch between various components of respect is precisely what leads people to continually re-evaluate which components are most important, and express it through their behaviour.

Age respect is an important part of the reason why the Executive runs village affairs; it is seen as natural that a group of 'elders' make the decisions for the village as a whole. However, recent changes in the status system have affected the importance of respect for age. In Chapter 8 I make the argument that religious and economic change in Boneoge have coincided, and had a mutually reinforcing effect on eroding these norms of age respect. While Boneoge remains a place heavily marked by age status, the younger generation has become relatively more empowered by these changes.

4.2.7 Gender

Gender is important to status; men are generally of higher status than women. The husband is officially recognised as the head of the household, and the wife is expected to obey him. In practice, women do have substantial input into household decisions, and control the family finances, but men have higher status in the social realm, and a woman is expected to treat her husband with respect in public. At weddings, funerals, and other ceremonies, men sit in the front part of the house, as respected guests, while women gather in the kitchen to cook and chat. Village meetings are attended almost exclusively by men; women only participate indirectly by discussing issues with their husbands at home. Women do not occupy positions of village leadership nor do they act as authorities on *adat* matters (except as traditional midwives).

Amongst women, status depends on factors such as age, wealth, nobility, and piety, as described above. But the status of a woman's husband is extremely influential and can outweigh these other factors.[162] For instance, when a Boneoge man achieves wealth in trading, for example, his entire household enjoys high status. The wives of the *miendo nobhala* live in large prestigious concrete houses, and have wealth – wealth which they have the power to spend, since

[162] The reverse is less true; a woman's high status, perhaps due to descent or education, does not augment her husband's status to the same degree.

women run household finances.[163] The wives are usually *hajjah* (women who have gone on the pilgrimage), which further bolsters their high status. The status which women enjoy due to their husbands' financial success also depends on the belief that wives have an important spiritual role in determining whether a man enjoys good fortune or not.

While some women are traders in their own right, and some manage to achieve a certain amount of wealth in trading, they do not achieve the status which a man would, partly because they do not interact in the same social arenas that men do. Having a husband is an important part of achieving status for Boneoge women; an unmarried woman has limited status since it is seen as proper for women to be married. Once she marries, the husband would normally take a strong role in her business affairs, making it difficult to attribute business success solely to her. Thus, again, the woman becomes dependent upon the status which her husband achieves.

4.2.8 Kinship and patronage

Boneoge kinship is characterised by cognatic descent (although membership in the *kaomu* noble rank is passed down through the male line), ambilocal post-marital residence, and a propensity for village endogamy. Second and third cousins are distinguished in the kinship terminology, but in practice third cousins (and sometimes second) become blurred into the general category of 'relatives' (*saudara*, BM *bahitie*). Village endogamy has meant that most Boneoge people are related to one another in some way, and this leads to a general feeling of kinship with the entire village.

Kinship is important to status in three main ways. First, one's descent is important. Descent determines one's position in the system of ranks, and

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[163] Errington has written on women's potency as compared to men's, and how women's control over household finances actually confirms their *lack* of potency, rather than the reverse: 'A man is more potent than his wife: he is the center of the relation, the encompassing, the unmoving, the more dignified. His wife is his active agent, his spokesperson, his periphery: she attends to practical needs, cooks, looks after children, takes care of money. In both Java and South Sulawesi, women have control over the family finances, and non-noble women are often merchants. Because they are active and control money, from an Occidental point of view they seem powerful and well off, and indeed in many respects they are. But their very 'power' and activity reveal their inferior potency, because activity and practicality bear an inverse relation to dignity' (1989: 288). These comments relate to the status of women relative to their husbands; when compared to other Boneoge people, women who have control over significant household finances are of high status.

additionally, any direct descent connection to past village leaders also brings a measure of social status.

Second, relations between immediate family members are highly constrained by the relative status arising from the kinship relation. Parents have a very strong, almost sacred, role in Boneoge social life. People tend to retain a close relationship with their parents throughout their lives, even if their relations with their siblings become distant. Young children are seen to begin their lives being wild and unable to control themselves, and eventually demonstrate that they are moral beings by learning to obey their parents, and by not bringing shame upon their parents through their behaviour. Children retain a strong respect and deference towards their parents for their whole lives. Even between parents and their adult children, such is the relation of respect that open discussion and debate is rare.

A high degree of respect is due to uncles and aunts (including classificatory uncles and aunts, for example one's parent's cousins), who have a strong sense of responsibility to provide assistance to their nieces and nephews, just as parents do towards their own children. Relations between siblings are characterised by strict behavioural prescriptions relating to seniority, and tend not to be very emotionally close, especially in adulthood. Relations with same-gender cousins are often closer, since the seniority restrictions which constrain sibling relations are relatively weaker between cousins.

The third way in which kinship is important to status relates to patronage networks. Patronage networks are primarily based around kin relations, and are extremely important in determining status. Clients must acknowledge and defend the high status of their patrons. Clients themselves also gain increased status by being associated with a high status patron. *Miendo nobhala* generally build extensive patronage networks amongst Boneoge people and these networks contribute greatly to their status.

These patronage networks to some extent grow out of pressures on successful people to provide assistance to kin. Attaining a high position in society comes with both rights and responsibilities; an important man can expect respect, obedience and labour from his kin group, but has a responsibility to help his kin

in their search for livelihood, as Rodenburg found for Batak society (1997: 96). Wealthy Boneoge traders tend to hire other Boneoge men or assist them in seeking livelihoods as a primary method of discharging this responsibility. This is evidence that wealth alone is not sufficient to ensure high status; someone wealthy who was unable or unwilling to assist young relatives in finding livelihoods would be seen as socially negligent and this would limit their status.

Patron-client relations are widespread in Buton, and in Boneoge. In Bugis society, if powerful men are able to keep many of their kin relations 'active' (see Lineton 1975a: 56) through patronage services, they can maintain their respected position of high status within the kin group and within the community. The same is true in Buton.

When Boneoge men migrate, they first aim to establish their own livelihood, and if successful, then attempt to assist relatives to establish livelihoods in the same location, for instance by summoning a younger brother to join them fishing in Papua. The *miendo nobhala* of Boneoge, who are wealthy traders, are able to hire many young relatives to assist them, as well as providing a variety of other forms of assistance to others. These men, usually *haji*, have become important nodes in the Boneoge social network, and people seek to associate themselves with them in order to augment their own status. Even those who do not have close kin connections can associate themselves with such a *mieno nobhala.* When I was interviewing Wa Belu about her time living in Ambon, she quickly pointed out that she lived in the 'orbit' of Haji Eru: 'in Ambon we lived close to Haji Eru. They helped us more than relatives do. We could borrow money, and pay it back when we earned some.' Wa Belu and her husband would repay this assistance by assisting with preparation for celebrations and ceremonies, and by acting as social allies of Haji Eru.

Miendo nobhala also enhance their status by providing patronage to the village at large, for instance by funding village projects. When village projects need funding, committees will approach the *miendo nobhala*, and it is expected that they will donate more than other people. Such generosity is in fact required in order to retain high status in the village; it is considered a social responsibility of the wealthy. The importance of donations to the community in calculations of status was clear when a villager, telling me about donations for recent mosque

renovations, said 'nobody could match Haji Ara!' This statement simultaneously referred to Haji Ara's status and the size of his donation.

The changes in economic endeavours undertaken in Boneoge migrations have led to changes in patron-client relations. Those Boneoge men who owned or operated sailing ships in the 1950s and 1960s hired young relatives and others to work as crew, and these would have been long term relationships. During the Ambon era, many Boneoge people managed to assist younger relatives in undertaking similar migrations, and some traders managed to hire dozens of Boneoge men. This is still the case in both Ambon and Papua. However for most young men, the most desired job is going to Hawaii. These jobs are not under the discretion of powerful older Boneoge men. Young men need loans to get to Hawaii, but loans are often provided by other young men who have just returned from Hawaii, and are repaid without the formation of a patron-client tie. This means that the prevalence of the Hawaii jobs has probably somewhat weakened patron-client ties in Boneoge, although they are still extremely important in Boneoge life. Changes in kinship and patronage, and the nature of Boneoge kin-based migration networks, are discussed further in Chapter 6.

4.2.9 Autonomy

Boneoge people strive for autonomy in particular aspects of their lives, and those who do not achieve it are looked down upon. Autonomy is thus another characteristic which can contribute to one's status.[164]

The journey to adulthood in Boneoge is seen as involving a series of steps of increasing autonomy from the parental household. First, a young man must earn money so that he can contribute to the finances of his parents' household and show that he is ready for marriage. After marriage, the couple typically lives with one set of parents or the other as they attempt to accumulate enough money to build their own house. During this time the man's wages are surrendered to his wife not to his mother. That is, although there is extensive sharing and cooperation, families living in the same house tend to run their finances

[164] There does not seem to be a *bahasa* Muna word for 'autonomy'; Boneoge people tend to use the Indonesian '*mandiri*' ('autonomous') instead. The gloss most often used in *bahasa* Muna is '*noohiimo semiemieno*' (something like 'to already live on one's own' with the sense of 'supporting oneself'; *hidup sendiri-sendiri*, in Indonesian).

separately, with each married woman purchasing goods to contribute to household needs. Eventually a young couple with their own earnings may decide to '*pisah dapur*' (separate the kitchen), where they do all of their own cooking and eat separately to their parents and any other couples in the house. This allows them to manage their food budget independently. The final stage is reached when the young couple moves into their own house (this usually occurs after they have saved enough money to build one, and obtained land for a site).

The urge to occupy their own house is strong for young couples. Men living with their in-laws describe feeling 'pressure' as they are in a low status position within the household, and their every move is being monitored. Women in the household of their in-laws are also under pressure to work hard on domestic chores. Some couples can only afford to build a very simple hut but still choose to move out from their parents' comfortable house in order to achieve autonomy. One day I was speaking with La Ilu and his father La Uje, who had both been working in East Timor until 1999. When they returned to Boneoge in that year, La Uje's house was full of people as some of his relatives had returned from Ambon also. La Ilu built a small hut beside the main house and moved into it. He told me, 'that is the advice of the elders, one must be independent...do not depend on your parents.' His father La Uje nodded approvingly at this.

Autonomy was notable in the political organisation of the Wolio Sultanate. Under the Sultanate, villages experienced a high degree of autonomy in running their day to day affairs (Schoorl 2003: 235). This was related to the diverse nature of the Sultanate which, rather than consisting of a homogenous ethnic group, was formed by conquest and immigration (ibid: 121). That is, the ethnic and linguistic diversity within the Sultanate probably rendered village autonomy a more workable political system. The language of the court, Wolio, is spoken primarily in the city of Baubau, and there are over a dozen different languages spoken in Buton. The ethno-linguistic sub groupings within the Butonese Sultanate formed a counterbalance to efforts to create a strong centre.

In fact the Sultanate often lacked the military power necessary to effectively protect, and control, the regions. This was the case during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when the danger from pirates and slave traders was great in Buton. As the centre was not strong enough to protect the villages from

this threat, people moved into the hills and built stone forts with which to defend themselves (Schoorl 2003: 121).[165] There were also rebellions by some villages in order to reject the control of the Sultan. For instance the village of Bombonawulu (near Boneoge) was at war with Wolio in late colonial times. A Boneoge elder told me the story of this battle, which is instructive for its emphasis on autonomy even at the expense of life itself:

> My grandfather was in the battle with Bombonawulu...he was raised in Baubau, so he was on the Wolio side. Bombonawulu lost. Before the battle, the two sides agreed to meet, and both sides drank palm wine together until they were drunk. Then the Wolio forces took their enemies' weapons away [and thus won the battle]. The Bombonawulu people then threw themselves off the cliff because they did not want to be ruled.

With the rise of the big men in Boneoge and the desire to emulate them, autonomy in one's occupation is increasingly important. Connections between autonomy, occupation and the concept of *sukses* are discussed further in the next chapter.

4.2.10 Education and occupation

A high level of education does bring a measure of status in Boneoge, but this is tempered by the fact that few of the most successful people in the village achieved their success through education. Commerce, not education, is seen as the route to success. Thus, the teachers and public servants of Boneoge are respected for their education and intelligence, but do not receive nearly the same respect as wealthy traders. Young people mostly aspire to be traders, and hope to achieve this by working in Hawaii, as soon as possible, not by going to school.

Occupation is also important to status. The previous chapter described the shift in occupations since Indonesian independence. Farming, fishing, and sailing were the most popular occupations for Boneoge people during the 1950s and 1960s, and farming was the lower status occupation. Farmers mostly resided in settlements in the hills behind Boneoge, near their gardens, and did not become wealthy. Those living at the beach engaged in fishing and trading, travelled throughout the archipelago, had experience of towns, and learned to speak the

[165] Many of these walled forts remain; Boneoge's fort, called the *Liwu*, was mentioned earlier.

Indonesian language – all of which contributed to their higher status. In the 1970s when settled trading in Ambon became popular, urban living, relative financial success, and the easy lifestyle of traders gave these people higher status than farmers.

By 2006, only 8% of workers were primarily farmers, 16% worked in Hawaii, and trading was the most popular occupation – both in terms of how many were currently trading (30%) as well as in terms of people's aspirations. Fishing remained popular at 21%, and Boneoge people also undertook a host of other occupations (see Table 4.1). Note that there were even more traders before the 1999 Ambon riots disrupted the livelihoods of the Boneoge traders in the Ambon fish market. Farming and labouring are the lowest status occupations, working in Hawaii brings high status because of the potential high salary, and the civil service has moderately high status because of the career stability (civil servants are almost never fired) and association with the government.

Table 4.1 Occupation of Boneoge workers[166]

Occupation	%
Farmer	8.0%
Fisher	21.4%
Labourer[167]	6.8%
Hawaii	16.3%
Small trader	24.3%
Medium trader	4.8%
Large trader	0.9%
Civil servant/military	4.5%
Driver	3.8%
Sewing/weaving	3.2%
Other	6.0%
Total	100.0%

[166] This data comes from a survey carried out in May-June 2006 with the assistance of a research assistant in Boneoge. For each person who was currently working, a primary occupation was listed, along with a secondary occupation if applicable (for instance, some farmers worked as labourers on the side; some who fished in Boneoge also sold fish in Ambon, some who worked in Hawaii also fished in Boneoge in between contracts). A distinction was made between traders with small, medium or large enterprises. Large enterprises are those generally run by rich *haji* traders, employing dozens of workers. Medium enterprises are typified by the clothes traders who have a small shop, employ several assistants, and regularly travel to Java to buy produce (of the order of 10 million rupiah or so). All the rest are considered small enterprises. See Chapter 5 for a more in depth discussion of these levels. Data could also by analysed by household, but I analyse by worker here.

[167] While labouring is the primary occupation for only 7% of workers, a good number of others (especially fishers and farmers) engage in labouring from time to time as a secondary occupation.

Trading has the highest status, but there is also a hierarchy between traders of different goods. Fish traders have the lowest status, followed by small scale traders such as those selling cigarettes or plastic bags. Clothes traders have higher status, especially when they become successful enough to begin hiring other Boneoge people to help. The status of various occupations is related to potential earnings, working conditions (fish are dirty and smelly), strenuousness, and autonomy (working under someone's direction or authority is undesirable).

4.3 Contesting Status

Status is continually negotiated and contested within the social group. Individuals can have different opinions about who is of high status, and the status of individuals can also rise and fall. People may also have different opinions about the relative weight of the various determinants of social status, and these weightings may also change over time. That is, people's views vary, and change over time, regarding both the position of individuals within the status hierarchy and the nature of the system itself. These changes and differences of opinion are renegotiated daily through a multitude of small scale social interactions.

Individuals can rise in the status hierarchy by acquiring a greater measure of any of the status determinants listed above, for instance by acquiring wealth, going on the pilgrimage, or offering service to the village in some way. On the other hand, of course, losing wealth or displaying poor morality or religion can lead to a decline in status. In increasing one's status it is vital that one's achievement be advertised to society in order that it is recognised. Holding large ceremonies is one way to advertise newly acquired wealth, for instance.

Aside from advertising one's achievement, in order to claim higher status one must take on the social mannerisms (including body language and speech modes, as described above) of a higher status person. Since status is relative, this means treating those previously considered equals as if they had lower status, and those previously considered superiors as equals. Others will either accept this behaviour, confirming the claimant's new level of status, or deny the status claim by not accepting the behaviour. Either way, the new behaviour pattern is seen as

a kind of challenge, which may be either submitted to or resisted (see Errington 1989).

In claiming higher status, then, one must act the part, and if endorsed by enough others, the claim will be successful. On the other hand if others challenge the claimant, then his or her claim to higher status may fail. Such claims and challenges can be carried out in a subtle and indirect manner, for instance when someone does not listen attentively to a high status person's stories, and begins to tell their own. I observed this kind of subtle challenge often, and in many cases the upstart was simply ignored, which sent them a subtle signal that they were speaking more than they should.

Status contestations also occur in more direct fashion in confrontations where one party or the other must back down. Such confrontations are related to inter-personal power, but since social etiquette is so dependent on status, they also reflect status claims and contestations. The Indonesian term *gertak* describes a direct confrontation through which one party seeks to dominate another.[168] The term *gertak* can refer to a physical confrontation or a social one, but in terms of status contestation it is the latter which is important.

A *gertak* usually involves breaking the image of social harmony which characterises most social interaction in Boneoge. For instance, if one person is telling stories, another could *gertak* them by abruptly and loudly questioning their version of events. This would be an implicit challenge to the person's status. If someone were to be dominating a social interaction, another example of a *gertak* would be to cut them off by telling them to go and do something, thus clearly placing them in a position of lower status. Although these challenges might seem very mild, they would be quite shocking and unacceptable if oriented towards somebody who was clearly of higher status. The target of a *gertak* can respond by becoming submissive, thereby accepting the higher status of the person who issued the *gertak*, or by meeting the challenge with a bold attitude, thereby attempting to defend the claimed status position.

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[168] '*Gertak*' literally means 'to snarl or threaten, to intimidate' (Echols and Shadily 1989).

In Buton, the *gertak* is an extremely common method of negotiating relative status.[169] Carrying out a successful *gertak* helps in establishing one's superior position over others. Knowing how (and when) to *gertak* (and how to respond to *gertak*) is an essential skill in negotiating social relations with others. In order to maintain and attempt to improve one's status position, one must continually push a little against others, and resist being pushed by them. A high status person who cannot defend his or her status by carrying out *gertak* against implicit challenges will lose their high status.

I witnessed a powerful demonstration of the importance of being able to *gertak*, when a neighbour told her two year old daughter to *gertak* a chicken. The child, who could barely walk, stumbled forward threateningly towards the chicken, which promptly fled. This won applause and praise from the onlookers, who exclaimed happily that the child 'could already *gertak* a chicken'. This was a physical *gertak*, but provides a model for the social form of confrontation.

Another method of claiming high status is through the telling of what I call 'power stories'. The telling of power stories is an extremely frequent form of social interaction in Buton, especially between people who have just met. Power stories seek to establish the greatness of either the speaker or of someone else who is associated with the speaker. A man meeting a new group of people might tell power stories in order to establish his status, or someone who is already acknowledged to be of high status (and thus is given the floor) might tell power stories to confirm or augment that status. Since establishing one's status is vitally important in determining the way one is treated, it is not surprising that in first encounters the entire conversation can consist of power stories.

These power stories are not only extremely common, but also tend to be based around one of several very common themes. One is 'being well-connected'. A power story might, for example, emphasise the speaker's closeness with a figure of even higher status ('the Governor? Oh, I am often at his house'), describing how this bigger man puts their trust in him ('he always calls me if he needs such-and-such'). Having ties to powerful figures raises one's status. Alternatively, a

[169] It is my impression that the word *gertak* is also used much more frequently in Buton than in Java, hinting at its cultural importance.

power story might emphasise that the speaker is known and respected by many people, which similarly establishes high status. This is often expressed as 'having a big name' in a particular location. For instance, someone might say, 'oh, you are going to Lombe? They know me there, just mention my name there, then you won't have any problems'.[170] Underlying this statement is the assumption that going somewhere outside of one's social network is dangerous, and one must mention connections to high status people in the new location in order to be treated with respect and cooperation. Telling people to 'just mention my name' is then a claim to power and high status in that location.[171]

A second common theme in power stories is 'people follow my advice'. These stories are about establishing high status by demonstrating influence over others. There are two slightly different versions. In the first version, the story describes an event where there was some sort of problem, and then the speaker told those present how to solve the problem or what decision to take. The group accepted the advice offered, and everything worked out all right. It is normally emphasized that the group did not question the advice, but immediately acted upon it (as a recognition of the speaker's high status).[172] The second version is where the group does *not* initially accept the advice. This means that they are considering the speaker to be of low status (*dipandang enteng*), which is portrayed as a mistake. In this version, after failing to follow the advice, the group then suffers some sort of negative consequences, leading them to change their attitude, and to respect and acknowledge the speaker.

A third common theme is 'I was challenged, and I won'. In this type of story, corresponding to what Errington (1989) calls a contest narrative,[173] the speaker describes an incident where his status was not adequately respected, or where he

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[170] Many of the power stories described here are so common that some of the phrasings have taken on a canonical form. For example, '*sebut saja nama saya*' (just mention my name) was one such fixed form which I heard dozens of times.

[171] Yunus, writing on Sufist influences on Butonese notions of power, has identified a Sufi notion relevant to this, whereby mentioning the names of the powerful can provide mystical guidance and protection (1995: 108).

[172] The commonly occurring phrasing for this statement was: 'I told them what to do, and they immediately did what I suggested' (*saya kasihtahu mereka, langsung mereka ikuti*). *Kasihtahu* (*memberitahu* in standard Indonesian) can mean 'to inform' but in particular contexts in Boneoge and Buton in general it comes to have a meaning more like 'to tell someone what to do'.

[173] Errington explained that 'the contest between two evenly matched peers is one of the most widespread ways of casting experience in narrative, drama, ritual, and conversation' (1989: 270).

was challenged outright (i.e. more directly than in the above example) – something which could be referred to as a *status contest*. In one version of this story, the speaker carries out a successful *gertak* against the challenger(s), proving his high status. In a second version, the speaker remains calm, while his followers get angry on his behalf. The anger of the followers acts as a threat which results in the proper respect being shown to their leader (the speaker).[174]

Power stories seek to establish the speaker's status by describing how others (especially high status others) have accepted that status, and how negative consequences have befallen those who failed to do so. Notions of power and status coincide in these stories. People expect status when they have power, and those who have high status are often assumed to possess mystical power. Calamities can befall people who do not sufficiently respect high status people. This is particularly the case for elders, *kamokula* who possess *ilmu*. Beliefs about mystical power possessed by high status people, and how these beliefs are changing, will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 8.

Power stories are so common in Boneoge that many conversations evolve into the telling of power stories, in which almost every statement can be seen to be a status claim (or a claim of mystical power). One example is the following story, which was told to me by La Unse, a *silat* (martial arts) instructor in Boneoge, as we sat on the beach near his house. Note that the story is about La Unse's *silat* teacher, not himself, but contains implicit claims to high status for himself by association.

> My teacher, La Haliki, learned silat in Singapore. He was from the [Wolio] keraton. They wanted to make him the village head, but he refused....so he moved to Boneoge. There is flying silat [the ability to fly] like in films...there is also the far-punch, all you need to know is the name of the target...it can work from here to Kabaena [an island about 50km away]. My teacher got his *ilmu* in Singapore...he lived there for more than ten years. All he did was study silat, read the Koran, and pray. There he studied under two men, Ua Senge and Ua Kama...they were not just anybody, they were Butonese. When people say that there are many people with *ilmu* in Gu [a neighbouring village], that's nonsense. Once there was a silat competition at the night market in Baubau. La Haliki was called to Baubau to face a man from

[174] The common phrasing was: 'it is not me who is angry, it is my people [followers] who are angry'. The implication that the leader is unable to control his followers is misleading. The followers are playing their proper role by providing a physical threat, while the leader is playing his role by displaying a calm composure.

> Kaledupa. People overlooked him because he was small, and his opponent was huge. La Haliki hit him once on the head and his head and body were split apart. He died on the way to the hospital. My teacher didn't talk about this, other people told me. Ua Senge and Ua Kama were also from Kaledupa, and the opponent that day was like an adopted child of theirs, so La Haliki regretted the death....In my style of silat, we wait, the opponent has to strike first....I don't want a wage job, I just keep fishing. Some people wanted to give me many hectares of coconut palms on Kabaena, but I refused.

The story begins by establishing the credentials of La Haliki, an elder (*kamokula*) who has powerful *ilmu*. He is from the *keraton*, the centre of status and mystical power in Buton, where he was asked to be village head, portraying his high status there. Consistent with the image of *kamokula* as not desiring political, or worldly, power, La Haliki turns down the office. This also explains that he did not move to Boneoge because of being rejected at the centre. Next, the fantastic capabilities of *silat* are described, showing that it is powerful *ilmu*. La Haliki's credentials are then bolstered by explaining that he studied in a faraway foreign place (which adds the aura of mystery to the power), although the teachers are of course Butonese, since Buton is where all the *ilmu* is. La Haliki's power is further established by the fact that the only things he spent time on were studying *silat*, reading the Koran and praying (i.e. acquiring Islamic *ilmu*). La Unse takes a moment to dismiss the reputation for *ilmu* of a neighbouring village; it is only Boneoge which has great *ilmu*. In the contest, La Haliki is teased for his small size. This fits with the notion that Butonese *ilmu* is hidden and those possessing it are humble (see Chapter 8). But La Haliki proves that his *ilmu* is very powerful indeed. La Unse then emphasises that La Haliki did not tell these stories himself, which shows his humility. Finally, La Unse indicates that he himself has been offered wealth in the form of coconut palms in Kabaena, but he refused. This serves to portray himself as a humble *kamokula*, which is a reminder that he is sure to have inherited his teacher's *ilmu*.

I heard such stories with remarkable frequency over the course of my time in Buton. Together they encapsulate Butonese notions of power and status. These stories often describe Buton, and the village of Boneoge, as centres of mystical power. This power is demonstrated through mystical duels when adversaries

meet, with Buton/Boneoge always winning.[175] The defeated opponent then explicitly recognises the *ilmu*/power/status of the winner, often being surprised or startled after having underestimated him. Powerful people are meant to be humble, not speaking of their great deeds, and not aggressive, waiting for their opponent to strike first. Powerful people control their emotions, but often have devoted subordinates who do not, and who are willing to defend their leader's honour with violence. When high status people give advice, others follow it, or suffer negative consequences which occur 'naturally', without human intervention. The same occurs if a high status person is disrespected in other ways; negative consequences follow naturally.

The emphasis on humility is interesting given the predilection for telling 'power stories' about one's abilities and status. Indeed there is a tension between boasting and humility; people often boast about how humble they are. Those with spiritual power must portray themselves as not seeking worldly power, and must not boast of their mystical abilities, in order to conform to the model of a high status elder. As one informant put it, 'Butonese people do not want to tell about themselves... according to the elders, if you are great, other people will tell'. Naked ambition is also frowned upon; those who hold office often explain say things like: 'I did not want to become village chief, but the people insisted'. On the other hand there is a need to advertise one's accomplishments or qualities in order to claim one's rightful status position.

4.4 Conclusion

Status is a vital part of Boneoge social life, and a whole host of factors influence an individual's position in the Boneoge status hierarchy. The relative importance of the various determinants of status has been changing over time. Some determinants have been falling in importance, such as rank (membership in the nobility), the holding of leadership positions, the possession of *adat* knowledge, and age. This does not mean they are no longer important, but that they have lost ground in comparison with other factors such as the possession of wealth and

[175] Interestingly, mystical power in Buton often involves the ability to travel instantly. Reflecting the importance of mobility in Butonese lives, powerful people are able to go anywhere just by closing his eyes; Wolio mosque officials used to mystically travel to Ternate to pray, and so on.

adherence to modernist Islam. Other chapters describe these changes in more detail and link them to each other and to broader regional conditions.

The status of individuals is not constant, and neither is the status system itself. Contestation about the status of individuals with particular combinations of qualities not only serves to recalibrate the position of those individuals within the system, but also serves as an opportunity for Boneoge society to renegotiate the parameters of the system itself. That is, gradual changes in community values and norms about what is worthy of respect in society can take place through a multitude of everyday interactions and contestations regarding the status positions of individuals.

CHAPTER 5
WEALTH, TRADING AND *SUKSES*

The new opportunities for accumulating wealth which have been accessed by Boneoge migrants since the 1970s have had broad impacts upon social status in the village, both in terms of individuals rising within the system and in terms of shifts in the system itself. Farming and sailing have been abandoned by the majority of Boneoge people, and most now aspire to be traders. Many Boneoge people became traders in or after the 1970s and some achieved considerable wealth. A small group of very wealthy traders now enjoy the highest status in Boneoge, and provide a model which almost all young people desire to emulate, a model which is referred to in Boneoge as '*sukses*'. The concept of *sukses* refers to a particular type of high status, one in which wealth is very important but not sufficient, with social aspects such as patronage and religious reputation remaining important. Underpinning the struggle to achieve *sukses* is a valorisation of hard work and steady capitalist accumulation, and other forms of economic life have consequently become morally devalued. This chapter discusses the rise of trading, the concept of *sukses*, and the implications of these economic changes for the status system.

5.1 New Economic Opportunities: the Rise of the Traders

The most marked change in Boneoge occupations over the past fifty years has been the decline of agriculture and the rise of trading. Chapter 3 described the migration experiences which led Boneoge people to engage in trading in Ambon and Papua. Many who had experience of the 'sailing era' managed to transition to a life of settled trading in Ambon. Many young Boneoge men seeking work for the first time in the 1970s went to Ambon to work in the fish market. Those who managed to accumulate capital expanded their businesses, some moving to Papua to trade clothes. The Hawaii migrations, which began in the 1990s, are heavily oriented towards accumulating capital in order to begin trading. By 2000, trading had become the overwhelmingly favourite livelihood aspiration of young

Boneoge people; very few young people wanted to become farmers or fishers. The most successful traders were often spoken about with awe and were at the top of the Boneoge status hierarchy. Most young Boneoge women desired to marry either traders or Hawaii boys – who were likely to become traders in the future.

A survey of current occupations which I carried out in 2006 found that 30% of Boneoge workers were traders and 16% were Hawaii boys (see Table 4.1). Although not all of these have achieved wealth and high status, trading and Hawaii are the primary livelihoods which are seen to offer potential; nobody in Boneoge achieves wealth and high status through fishing or farming. The 21% of Boneoge workers who were fishers were of low status, and acknowledged the desirability of a trading lifestyle, which they believed was out of their grasp. Although in the 1960s most Boneoge people had gardens, by 2000 only 8% of workers lived primarily from farming, and these were mostly over 50 years of age. Almost no young people aspired to be farmers; in fact most had never been up to visit Boneoge's gardens in the hills just outside the village.

Trading and Hawaii work are the main new economic opportunities which have transformed Boneoge economic life and led to shifts in the status system. In this section, I explore in more detail the experiences of Boneoge traders, in particular focusing on how some of them have progressed into becoming very successful and wealthy in their businesses. Boneoge people trade a number of different goods, from plastic bags to fish to clothes. Many have no capital of their own, while others own vehicles and warehouses and employ dozens of people. For the purposes of discussing Boneoge experiences of trading, I divide these traders up into three main categories by level of financial success, although in fact these categories represent points on a continuum rather than discrete types. The categories described here are 'small scale traders', 'entrepreneurs', and 'big men'.

The category of 'small scale traders' covers several different economic arrangements. Some people possess a little capital of their own, and trade in small items such as cigarettes or hair ties, carrying their entire stock with them as they circulate. However, many Boneoge people began their trading careers, and continue to trade, with no capital at all of their own. These might be called

'consignment traders' since they earn money by selling someone else's goods for them, paying the owner an agreed-upon price for the goods only after they have been sold, and keeping the extra as profit. In other cases, the trader will surrender the entire sale price to the owner of the goods, who will then pay a wage to the trader; under this arrangement a more appropriate term might be 'wage traders'.[176]

Those I call 'entrepreneurs' are traders who have accumulated at least US$1000 of capital of their own. In most cases these people will employ several assistants to supervise their business, which is usually based in a rented shop in a market.[177]

The most successful traders are called 'big men' (*miendo nobhala*), and are acknowledged as the wealthiest traders in Boneoge, who have achieved what is called '*sukses*'. They typically own large concrete houses in Boneoge as well as in Ambon or wherever they trade, hire many workers, and have gone on the *hajj* pilgrimage. It is these men who occupy the highest status positions in Boneoge, higher than nobles, the leaders of the village administration, high-ranking mosque officials, and old and wise *adat* leaders.

5.1.1 Small scale traders

One of the main reasons why Ambon became a popular migration destination among Boneoge people in the 1970s was the availability of work in the fish market (as described in Chapter 3). This work was desirable in a number of ways. Many wanted the opportunity to live in the city and experience an urban lifestyle with modern facilities. There was a burgeoning Boneoge diaspora community, meaning that one would not be isolated from kin and friends. Finally, and importantly, Ambon offered opportunities for Boneoge people to begin trading without having capital of their own. Boneoge people praised

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[176] Those in this first category could also be called 'petty traders' (Evers 1994). Alexander's thorough analysis of Javanese traders (1987) outlined the local terms used for various types of traders. However, Boneoge people referred to all traders simply as '*pedagang*' (in *bahasa* Indonesia) or *podagano* (in *bahasa* Muna), although they often added some comment which distinguished between the three types I describe, for instance clarifying that a trader is a '*pedagang kecil-kecilan*' (just a small trader).

[177] Guinness (1986) also distinguishes 'entrepreneurs' from 'petty traders' based on how much capital they bring to the trading endeavour.

Ambon as a migration destination where 'you can begin trading without capital...trust is enough, you can take someone's goods, sell them, and then pay the owner afterwards'. This has been the case since the 1970s, according to informants. In this way, migrants could reliably obtain a daily profit, without needing start-up capital. Trading also carried hope, since some traders managed to become wealthy. Trading in Ambon thus offered comfortable living, reliable earnings, and the chance to make it big. As noted in Table 4.1, 30% of Boneoge workers were traders in 2006, but informants told me that far more people had been traders before the 1999 Ambon riots.

Of course many Boneoge people working in the Ambon fish market (or elsewhere) never managed to accumulate the capital necessary to expand into bigger and better things. Many continued as consignment traders from the 1970s until the time of my fieldwork, and in fact these consignment traders constitute the majority of Boneoge traders. The 2006 occupations survey which I conducted found that of Boneoge traders, 81% were consignment traders or small scale traders, 16% were entrepreneurs, and only 3% (or nine people of the 296 traders in Boneoge) had achieved 'big man' status.

One consignment trading job commonly undertaken by Boneoge migrants in Ambon was that of '*papalele*'. A *papalele* sells the catch for fishers immediately as they reach land. The *papalele* waits at the pier for the boats (often *arumbai* boats[178]) to come in, the catch is unloaded into baskets, and then the *papalele* sells the fish by the basket to fish traders from the market who come to the pier.[179] The *papalele* usually has a stable arrangement with particular fishing boats. He has the right to determine the price, and gets a percentage. The fish is normally sold within an hour, and then the *papalele* pays the fisher. The fish traders then take the fish to the market and sell them in small amounts to shoppers. Two of my neighbours in Boneoge have worked as *papalele* in Ambon for three decades, continuing to do so after the Ambon riots of 1999.

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[178] *Arumbai* is a type of fishing boat (also called *redi* in Ambon) with a large circular net, used to catch small fish.

[179] '*Papalele*' is used in a number of different ways. I also heard the term *papalele* used for those consignment traders who buy a basket of fish and then sell from house to house. Dick describes *papalele* as 'engaged by Chinese trading firms in Makassar to meet incoming prahus and bargain for their custom' (1975a: 82).

Other Boneoge men worked in the Ambon fish market, selling on behalf of someone who had bought the fish (from a *papalele* or elsewhere). My neighbour Hamadi worked like this from 1972 until the riots in 1999 (after which time he remained in Boneoge). After the fish were sold, Hamadi surrendered all takings to the boss, who then paid Hamadi a daily wage. Hamadi found a niche and stuck with it; he never became wealthy, nor changed his method of trading, during his 28 years in Ambon. He did not accumulate capital and open his own trading venture. Many Boneoge men followed a similar pattern, and in fact their style of mobility made it difficult for them to accumulate capital.

During the 1970s many such consignment traders worked in Ambon while their families lived in Boneoge. When a man had managed to save a bit of money, he would buy a boat ticket home to Boneoge to visit his family, surrendering the remainder of his savings to his wife on arrival. After being in Boneoge for several weeks or months, during which time he would not be earning money, he would return to his job in Ambon. This back and forth travel, with periods of inactivity in Boneoge, usually meant that earnings were used for family needs and could not be used as start-up capital for a trading endeavour.

A man working in Ambon is expected to send money home to his wife in Boneoge regularly, but in practice many did not. Women in Boneoge had to be resourceful in satisfying their family's needs during the periods in between their husbands' visits, which could be a few months or could be much longer. The family of Hamadi, mentioned above, provides an example. Although Hamadi was a trader, his family was not wealthy, and had to undertake a number of different economic activities in order to survive, as can be seen from this account of Hamadi's life (assembled from my field notes):

> Hamadi was born in 1935, got married in 1959, and was a sailor until 1971 when he went to Ambon. He sold cigarettes for a year, and then began selling fish in the fish market in 1972. He continued this until the Ambon riots broke out in 1999. Hamadi slept in a mosque, never owning or renting a house in the almost 30 years he spent in Ambon. He would return to Boneoge once every few years. His daughter told me, 'look at how many years are between me and my siblings...that's how often he returned to Boneoge' [there was about three years between each]. When he did visit, he would not work for a couple of months, and when his earnings were spent, he would return to Ambon. While he was away, his wife had several ways of supporting the children. She maintained a garden which provided maize and cassava. Hamadi brought her a sewing machine from Singapore in 1960, which she then used to make

> clothes for people in Boneoge in order to earn money. She also made snacks (which she continued to do in 2006), which her children sold around the village, and wove sarongs, which could sometimes be sold for cash. The older male children would help to supply food by fishing off the beach with a net.

Some Boneoge migrants did use their own capital in small trading endeavours, and the majority of these were, again, fish traders. A few others traded cigarettes or other products, but virtually all Boneoge traders got their start in the fish market. The abundant opportunities in the Ambon fish market existed, informants explained, because of the dominance of Butonese people there; other markets (both in the physical sense and the economic sense) were controlled by other ethnic groups and it was difficult for Butonese to enter.

A few Boneoge men made their living from a more mobile style of trading. Using (a few hundred dollars worth of) their own capital, these men would purchase goods in the major cities of Makassar, Jakarta, or Surabaya – but only as much as they could carry with them. These goods might be anything from kitchen utensils to child's toys to clothes. They would depart on a passenger ship to eastern Indonesia with their goods as personal luggage, and then either sell in one particular town market or alternatively walk from village to village selling from house to house. After a week or two selling, they would return on the passenger ship and repeat the entire cycle. These mobile traders tended to have a regular pattern of movement, travelling on the same ship as it made its way back and forth across the country, selling the same product, buying a similar amount of stock, and often using networks of relatives in their trading destination so that they would have a place to stay. Although it might happen that such a trader would experience enough success to open a market stall and maintain a permanent presence in some eastern Indonesian town, more frequently these traders maintained their mobile style, earning enough to support their family but not enough to expand their business. Small scale traders of this sort earned approximately Rp500,000–1,000,000 (US$55–110) per month in 2003.

Some Boneoge traders did manage to accumulate capital and purchase more goods, or change products and markets, becoming 'entrepreneurs'. But most did not. Explanations by traders themselves as to how they managed to become more financially successful focus on their ability to accumulate capital. In fact, though, other factors were likely important as well. Rodenburg, writing on Batak

migration, suggests that 'petty traders' (those having very little stock and income, and (usually) a regular pattern of movement as they sell) are mostly 'confined to their present small-scale trading by lack of capital, connections, experience and ambition' (1997: 61). Those Boneoge traders who remained consignment traders or small scale traders for decades did often lack the capital with which to buy more stock, the connections with which to explore new markets, and the experience with which to know what markets might be lucrative. Rodenburg's fourth characteristic – a lack of ambition – raises the question of whether the 'stagnant' traders in question were in fact attempting to expand their businesses or not. Some Boneoge traders may be very ambitious but lack the capital and experience to expand. Others may indeed 'lack ambition', although this may be merely another way of stating that they do not possess a strong drive for continual accumulation. In fact Boneoge traders, and Boneoge people in general, possess varying degrees of the capitalist drive to maximise earnings through continual effort. As I will explore below, describing such traders as lacking ambition may stem from an ideological position which endorses capitalist development and individual accumulation, and which perceives those people who do not share this view to be morally deficient.

5.1.2 Entrepreneurs

During the 1970s and 1980s, most Boneoge traders remained small scale, and a very few managed to become 'big men', usually through their trading in the Ambon fish market. Indeed, during those decades Boneoge economic activity remained oriented towards the Ambon fish market. Those traders achieving an intermediate level of success, which I call 'entrepreneurs', became more numerous in the 1990s. By 2006 (when I conducted my survey) there were 49 Boneoge entrepreneurs – defined as those who dealt with stock worth at least US$1000 and who employed assistants – and this group was rapidly growing. Almost all of these entrepreneurs were selling clothes in Papua.

For most Boneoge people, trading clothes is more desirable than trading fish. Boneoge people consider trading to be of higher status than other occupations such as fishing, farming, or labouring (for reasons explored throughout this thesis), but within trading, there is an informal hierarchy of trade goods (as found

for Batak traders by Rodenburg (1997: 61)), and fish ranks right at the bottom, likely due to the messy and odorous nature of the product. For an aspiring clothes trader, the first requirement is capital; one needs about US$1000 to begin such a business (one could trade clothes with less capital, but would not be able to hire assistants or rent a market stall, and so would be more likely to be a mobile small scale trader). Secondly, one needs access to a market; the clothes market in Ambon is said to be dominated by Bugis people, and competition is fierce and profit margins low. Boneoge entrepreneurs tend to sell their clothes in Papua, in towns such as Serui, Biak, and Nabire, or more rarely in small towns in southeast Maluku such as Tual or Dobo. Although some clothes traders are mobile, most settle in one of the small towns, chosen for their lucrative markets with high turnover and good profits for clothes trading.

The lifestyle of many of the clothes entrepreneurs follows a pattern as follows. Most of their time from morning until night is spent in their market stall, waiting for (and on) customers purchasing clothes. When assistants are present, they deal with customers leaving the owner free to handle the money or even to take breaks and leave the stall. Most entrepreneurs rent a house near the market (those just starting out sometimes sleep in the market at their stall). Trips are made to Java to purchase new stock, once every two or three months. Traders often visit Boneoge for a couple of days on the way to Jakarta as the ships usually stop in Baubau. Several large sacks of clothes are purchased from the markets in Jakarta, with attention paid to selecting fashions which might sell well in their location. These sacks are transported to Papua on the PELNI passenger ships. The trader travels on the same ship, although after 2003 the rising costs of ship fares and the falling costs of airfares meant that some entrepreneurs began flying back and forth for these purchasing trips. If wise choices of stock are made, and a loyal clientele is cultivated at the market stall, then an entrepreneur might earn US$300-600 per month. This level of income would allow a trader to increase his capital, increase his amount of stock, and eventually move up to a larger market stall. Entrepreneurs visit Boneoge relatively often, since they sometimes pass through the village on the way to Jakarta, and on annual celebrations such as Lebaran they often have the funds necessary to return to the village for a holiday.

Entrepreneurs are people who managed to obtain the capital needed to begin trading clothes. Some managed to accumulate money through various jobs in Ambon, including fish trading. More often, though, they obtained capital through the labour of Hawaii boys, who in the late 1990s managed to bring home large pay packets which could serve as start-up capital for clothes trading (see Chapter 3). Either the Hawaii boys themselves would become clothes traders, or a close family member (mother, brother) would use the Hawaii wages to trade clothes while the Hawaii boy went on another contract at sea in order to take advantage of the high wages available. Thus some clothes traders obtained their capital from family loans.

Besides capital, though, social networks are also important in becoming a clothes entrepreneur in Papua. Aspiring clothes traders who have accumulated capital usually choose to begin trading at some town in Papua where they have a relative who is already trading clothes. This is so that the relative can act as a mentor, teaching them things such as stock selection, where to purchase stock in Jakarta, how to transport stock, how to manage their stall in Papua, and how to deal with customers including setting prices. The new trader often occupies a similar but not identical niche to their relative, selling clothes of a slightly different nature so as to prevent direct competition between them.

Entrepreneurs often hire assistants, usually their own kin from Boneoge, who are summoned to the migration location with an offer of work. If the relative brings their own capital, then they will be mentored in selling their own stock, and will not be an assistant. A young relative who arrives without capital becomes an assistant, dependent on and thus indebted to the entrepreneur. The assistant works in the shop of the boss, and sometimes does not receive a wage. He or she becomes a member of the boss's household, eating and sleeping in the boss's house. The assistant gains the knowledge needed to become a clothes trader, and at some point, often upon marriage, the boss may provide the assistant with capital in order to purchase his or her own stock and become independent.[180]

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[180] Another possibility is that the assistant will take some of the boss's stock and go from village to village selling it, timing such visits to coincide with harvests of local crops so that the people have money to spend. Many Butonese traders made money by following the clove harvest in

Such kin networks are of vital importance in enabling Boneoge migrants to become successful traders. In 1999, thousands of Boneoge people returned to Boneoge from Ambon because of the conflict raging there. Many who managed to bring capital with them embarked on new migrations to Papua, seeking out kin and joining the ranks of the clothes traders in Papua. The benefits to the new migrants are clear; the established migrants, for their part, are generally eager to assist kin from Boneoge from a sense of familial duty, but this is also an important way in which they can build patronage networks (this is discussed further in Chapter 6).

5.1.3 Big men

While the entrepreneurs have much higher incomes than fishers, farmers, labourers, and small scale traders in Boneoge, they are by no means the wealthiest people in the village. The nine wealthiest people in Boneoge are all traders who have built up their businesses to be much larger than those of the entrepreneurs. These men (for they are all men) are known as 'big men' (*miendo nobhala*), and play a major role in Boneoge social life. They are the highest status men in the village, they have large social networks of supporters, and young men aspire to be like them. In fact there is a remarkable degree of uniformity in the aspirations of the youth of the village. Rare is the young Boneoge person who aspires to be a powerful shaman, a high ranking civil servant, or a knowledgeable academic. Rather, almost all young men wish to emulate the lifestyles and achievements of the big men – which go beyond mere wealth.

There is also a remarkable degree of uniformity in the characteristics of these big men themselves, and it is this which allows their joint example to serve as a clear model to which young men can aspire. These big men are all wealthy *haji* traders, who base their trading business in Ambon or Papua (with a couple of exceptions), employ dozens of young Boneoge men in their enterprises, possess a reputation for proper observance of Islam, and retain close connections with the

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Seram, for example. This mobile trading is considered hard work, though, and people who have enough capital usually prefer to station themselves at a market, even if they can only afford a small kiosk on wheels (*kaki lima*), progressing to renting a market stall when possible.

village of Boneoge. Current patterns of Boneoge migration are highly influenced by the model of the big men, as young migrants seek to emulate their success.

I quickly came to know the names of the big men as villagers frequently spoke of them. When in Boneoge, these men were prominent at rituals and social events, but were often absent from the village as their businesses were based elsewhere. When people told me about their employment history, the names of the *miendo nobhala* were frequently mentioned, as in 'I was selling fish in Ambon for Haji Kati' or 'I worked on one of Haji Ara's boats'. The big men are typically described with awe and respect, as they exemplify everything to which young men aspire. They are all described as generous and willing to assist their neighbours and relatives. Many comments also specifically refer to their high status, such as 'Haji Ara is the number one boss here'.

Haji Kati is perhaps the quintessential big man in Boneoge. Haji Kati was born probably in the late 1940s, and moved to Ambon in the 1960s as a young man. He worked in the fish market, and by about 1968 was trading in salted fish. Around 1973 he managed to become the monopoly buyer of salted fish from the Japanese company PT Tofiko, which, I was told, had 14 prawn ships selling their off-catch of fish in Ambon city. Every few days one of these ships would dock in Ambon, and sell all its fish to Haji Kati. This business made him wealthy, and by 1990 he was able to go on the *hajj* with his wife. In order to unload, freeze, and sell this fish he requires dozens of staff, and almost all of his employees are Boneoge men. When in 1999 the Ambon riots made it unsafe for the Japanese ships to dock in Ambon, Haji Kati arranged for them to dock in Kendari (the capital city of Southeast Sulawesi province), and moved his operation there. In 2003, he was able to partially resume operations in Ambon, running the business in both locations. He has a house in Kendari for each of his two wives, another house in Boneoge, and several in Ambon. He frequently comes to Boneoge and contributes heavily to any public project in the village. He is very highly regarded and well liked in Boneoge. Haji Kati regularly holds ostentatious ceremonies in Boneoge; an *alano fotu* (BM: 'the taking of the hair', or first haircut) ceremony for his grandson which I attended was also attended by most of the high status men of Boneoge and some from the sub-district capital. The

extent of his social network was described by one man who told me: 'if Haji Kati calls the [provincial] governor to Boneoge, he comes!'

Most of the other big men also got their start in the Ambon fish market in the 1970s and 1980s, and many of them remained there until the 1999 Ambon riots disrupted their businesses. At that point two of them began selling clothes, with one of these moving his business to Manado, North Sulawesi. Another had moved to Papua before the riots, selling staple commodities and second hand clothing. Haji Ara, the most successful of them all, runs a fishing fleet in Ambon. He has the highest status of any Boneoge person, higher than the village officials, *adat* leaders and nobles. One recognition of this is that he is given a kind of veto power over decisions by the village leaders in Boneoge. One village leader explained, 'when we have some kind of an election here, we send Haji Ara news [in Ambon]. If he approves the new appointment, then we go ahead with it. It's a form of respect for him'.

5.2 The Notion of *Sukses*: a Shift in the Status System

This section discusses the concept of *sukses*, which encapsulates the aspirations of most Boneoge people and is based on the example set by the big men. The nine big men of Boneoge were acknowledged by all to have achieved *sukses*, while certain others were seen to have achieved some measure of it. People frequently spoke to me about *sukses*, about who had achieved *sukses* and who had not, and about their own struggle to achieve it.

The big men who typify *sukses* have the highest status in Boneoge, but some people who do not have *sukses* do have high status; in short, the concept of *sukses* describes a particular *type* of high status. This thesis argues that the '*sukses*' model of status has been becoming more predominant vis-à-vis other models of status, and that this represents a shift in the relative importance of certain determinants of status.

Wealth is a necessary and very important part of *sukses*, but *sukses* is about more than just wealth. To be seen to have achieved the pinnacle of *sukses* in Boneoge, four main characteristics are required: wealth, a reputation for being an observant Muslim, strong social connections in the village, and autonomy in one's private and working life. I will discuss each of these in turn. Most of these

factors have already been discussed in Chapter 4; here I am emphasising their role in the particular version of high status being discussed here: *sukses*.

5.2.1 Wealth

Wealth is the keystone of *sukses*. Indeed the wealthiest men in the village are those frequently mentioned as exemplifying *sukses*, and the term is rarely if ever applied to people who are not wealthy. Wealth seems to unambiguously augment a person's status; there are few examples of people whose wealth actually lowers their status through moral judgments regarding how the wealth was obtained (there are, however, moral judgments about how a person *uses* his wealth which can lower his or her status). This section discusses the current economic inequalities in Boneoge, the ways in which people have used their new wealth, and how this relates to status.

Income disparities are now extreme in Boneoge. The big men are at the pinnacle of the Boneoge economic spectrum, running large businesses, owning several large houses in different places, and earning at least US$4,000 per month.[181] Men working in Hawaii also earn high wages, up to US$1000 per month. At the low end of the earning spectrum, some farming and labouring households surviving on an income of US$40 per month. This is no economically homogenous village.[182]

The economic inequality in Boneoge is much more extreme than it was during the 1980s, mainly because of the Hawaii migration. The Hawaii jobs became available during the 1990s, and then the wages increased drastically (in rupiah terms) during the 1997 Southeast Asian economic crisis. When the rupiah plunged to one sixth of its value, the Hawaii salaries, paid in US dollars, were suddenly six times higher relative to the rupiah wages of other Boneoge villagers. The 1999 Ambon riots pushed more young men towards Hawaii jobs,

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[181] One of them goes on the *hajj* pilgrimage every year, paying for a group of five or six relatives to accompany him, which costs about US$24,000 – indicating that his earnings must be many times that much.

[182] Income disparities are common when there is a shift from agricultural subsistence to the market-oriented sale of labour. Booth has pointed out the likelihood that 'growing access to non-agricultural wage employment will aggravate income inequalities in many parts of rural Indonesia, as indeed appears to be the case in other parts of the world' (2004:30). In another sense, the 1999 riots led to large scale return migration to Boneoge, and return migration does tend to increase stratification within a community, as Momsen found in the Caribbean (1992: 81).

and several hundred Boneoge men have now partaken of this migration. Hawaii migrations tend to run in the family, due to the assistance which siblings can provide each other in obtaining access to Hawaii contracts. This means that many families have three or four sons in Hawaii, while many have none, further exacerbating income disparities between households. Many families benefiting from Hawaii salaries have gone on to become traders in Papua, further increasing their wealth. During the 1980s then, a few families did become wealthy through trading in Ambon, but the disparities are now far more pronounced with hundreds of families having achieved significant wealth while many others are barely subsisting.

This new wealth has been used for a number of purposes, but commonly the main priorities are building houses, going on the *hajj* pilgrimage, and saving capital to be used in expanding (or beginning) trading businesses – all of which are related to questions of status. Hawaii boys often use the wages from their first few contracts to improve their parents' lives rather than their own, but they focus on similar things.[183]

Many of those with wealth have built large concrete houses, and differences in house types provide a visually powerful demonstration of wealth disparities in the village. The two main house types in Boneoge are concrete houses (*rumah batu*) and traditional wooden stilt houses (BM: *lambu tada*). In many cases brightly painted three-storey concrete houses with balconies and tiled floors stand beside one-roomed shacks with woven bamboo walls and wooden frames. People now prefer concrete houses as they are seen as more comfortable (you do not have to climb up and down a ladder to get in, and they can accommodate interior plumbing) and prestigious.[184] A construction boom was sparked by the return of Boneoge migrants after the Ambon riots as well as the increase in

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[183] In Boneoge, household finances are controlled by the women; an unmarried man turns over his wages to his mother, while a married man turns over his wages to his wife. If a man needs money for cigarettes or other things, he requests it from his wife or mother; she is unlikely to refuse him if the request is small, but if he asks for half of his salary for cigarettes then, as an informant put it, 'his wife would surely be angry'. Wives are responsible for making sure that the family's needs are satisfied. For larger financial decisions there tends to be consultation between husband and wife. For simplicity, in the text I continue to speak as if the earner is making decisions about how to spend the money.

[184] The construction of concrete houses not only radically changes the look of the village but also affects land tenure. Stilt houses can be lifted and moved if a plot of land is divided upon inheritance or in case of a land dispute; this flexibility is lost when concrete houses are built.

Hawaii wages associated with the economic crisis, and almost all of the new houses are concrete ones.[185] Married couples generally desire to have their own house rather than to share. A large concrete house is one of the most visible emblems of status in Boneoge, and also serves as a symbol of modernity since it is the housing style of government officials and other wealthy people in urban centres.[186]

All of the big men have used some of their funds to go on the *hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca with their wives. It is an important goal in life for many Boneoge people, and also one of the most effective ways to convert economic power into religious and social status. A returning *haji* (male) or *hajjah* (female) enjoys very high status in Boneoge, and people in the village know exactly who has gone on the pilgrimage and who has not. Some of the big men have gone on the pilgrimage more than once. Many Hawaii boys pay for their parents to go on the *hajj* rather than going themselves.

Using wealth as capital to begin a trading business, or to expand a trading business, is so popular that it may be called an obsession in Boneoge.[187] After finishing a number of Hawaii contracts most young men desire to switch to a life of trading clothes. A few plan to trade in Baubau, but due to the high level of competition, turnover is slow and thus profits are low. The majority plan to trade in Papua. By becoming a trader, a young man can set himself along the path to

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[185] Concrete houses are a relatively new development in Boneoge. Before 1977 there were none, and by 1999 there were only approximately ten. After the arrival of the Ambon refugees in 1999, many families lived with relatives or on the ground under people's stilt houses; the village was overflowing with people needing their own houses. Some had brought money from Ambon, and others had access to funds from Hawaii migrations. By late 2003 there were 178 concrete houses in Boneoge, and 25 more under construction, out of a total of 697 houses in the village. Some who lived in *lambu tada* also built concrete houses, leaving the old stilt house to become the kitchen appended to the new house, or, if in good condition, the second floor above the new house.

[186] Concrete houses are symbols of status in many parts of Indonesia, as described by Pannell, writing on Maluku, 'Today, many people aspire to live in a rumah batu (usually a concrete block house with an iron roof), the new architectural status symbol promoted by the central government and inspired by nationalist sentiments' (Pannell 2003: 21). Other researchers have also found that it is common for return migrants to erect houses as monuments of their success (for instance King and Strachan (1980: 178) writing about Malta).

[187] Other ways of investing earnings are much less popular than becoming a trader. People do not invest their earnings in purchasing agricultural land in Boneoge, since land is available to use without purchasing. A few people have purchased speed boats to be used to convey passengers across the Buton Straits between Muna and Buton islands, but competition is high and profits have plunged.

sukses which he has seen followed by the big men. Hawaii boys know that they will not be able to continue doing Hawaii work forever; it is physically taxing, difficult to obtain placements, and may not be available indefinitely. The long separations from Boneoge are also seen as especially arduous after one has a wife and children. As La Ode Taate put it, 'I tell them to collect capital first, then marry and begin trading. It's unpleasant to go on migrations [to Hawaii] after they are married.'

Wealth is also used for the holding of ceremonies and the spreading of patronage, especially by big men. Both of these are methods of converting wealth into status. When the child of a big man gets married, or when a grandchild has a 'first haircut' ceremony (*alano fotu*), wealth can be displayed by inviting hundreds or thousands of guests, and by killing many animals for the feast. One's social position should be reflected in the ostentation of the ceremonies one holds, and in fact the ostentation of one's ceremonies helps to determine one's status (see Geertz 1980).[188] Big men also tend to spend a lot on spreading patronage. This includes distributing cash and gifts to relatives or others and lending money to people with urgent needs. Distributing patronage can augment one's social status and increase one's political power. Hawaii boys also tend to be generous at the time they receive their final pay packet, giving some money to younger relatives and lending to those in need. Patronage distribution, including the offering of employment opportunities, is discussed below (as well as in Chapter 6).

Unmarried Hawaii boys tend to spend their money on their parents. Hawaii wages provide a comfortable income for parents, meaning that they do not have to work. Aside from supporting daily needs, Hawaii wages are often used to repair or replace the parents' house or to send the parents on the pilgrimage. Successful sons raise the status of the family as a whole, and the sons are seen as morally upstanding if they devote time and money to making their parents more comfortable (through improvements to their house) or assisting them in achieving their highest religious aspiration – the pilgrimage. Hawaii wages have

[188] Status is shown by the type of animal slaughtered for the feast. Cow, the most expensive, brings more status than goat, and goat is more prestigious than chicken. A meal served with just fish would be at the bottom of the scale.

led to a great increase in the number of *hajj* pilgrims in Boneoge, and Hawaii boys often delay marriage until they have sent their parents on the pilgrimage. Once married, Hawaii boys tend to focus on building a house for themselves and saving money to use as capital in a trading business.

5.2.2 Islam and morality

To be considered to have achieved *sukses*, one must cultivate a reputation as a good Muslim; that is, one must not openly engage in immoral acts, and one must be seen to hold the proper Muslim observances. The big men of Boneoge are never seen to drink or gamble, although one of them used to be known for doing so in his youth. I was told of this by an informant who was explaining how this big man had started with nothing, that he had been a drinker and a gambler, but that eventually he stopped his immoral behaviour, and fate smiled on him, and he achieved great *sukses*. It seems that there is a perceived connection between good behaviour and good fortune, as if good behaviour, although not guaranteeing that one will achieve *sukses*, can increase the chances. Either the big men of Boneoge do not partake of sinful behaviour such as drinking and gambling, or they hide it well.[189]

Proper Muslim observances, as described in Chapter 4, include praying five times per day, fasting during the fasting month of Ramadhan, and holding prayer gatherings at one's home. Another way to demonstrate commitment to Islam is to donate funds for the poor, for instance after the fasting month when Muslims are obliged to pay the '*zakat*' tax, and at *Idul Adha* (the day of sacrifice) when Muslims who are able are expected to pay for a goat or cow to be butchered and divided amongst the poor of the village. The big men of Boneoge are certainly able, and generally do donate. Donating a cow in particular serves as a sign of one's *sukses*, given the high cost of doing so.

The clearest way to demonstrate *sukses* and Islamic reputation, though, is to undertake the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage is an obligation for all Muslims who are financially able, but the high cost means that only those with significant wealth can afford it. It thus serves to demonstrate wealth, as well as

[189] Good behaviour and good fortune were seen to be linked during the sailing era also. If a woman cheated on her husband while he was at sea, for instance, his ship might sink.

demonstrating a certain level of achievement in Islam. The *hajj* experience is said to represent the peak of one's spiritual journey, and one is said to return a changed person – calmer, wiser and fulfilled. All of the big men have completed the pilgrimage, some several times, and it appears to be a necessary part of the ideal model of *sukses*.

Such is the importance of going on the pilgrimage that the order in which the big men went on the pilgrimage marks their relative *sukses*. Of the nine living big men, Haji Kati and Haji Ara went on the pilgrimage first, in 1990, and the others later. The big men all seemed to go on the *hajj* as soon as they could afford it, and thus the order of departure roughly reflects who became wealthy earliest and thus who has had *sukses* for the longest. Having had *sukses* for a long time, Haji Kati and Haji Ara have continued to accumulate wealth and have built larger patronage networks than the other big men. Precedence in the pilgrimage thus helps to mark relative *sukses*.

Of course, the particular observances or religious achievements which are sought by those seeking to attain or demonstrate *sukses* may change over time. Currently, modernist Islam is the dominant form, and thus people do not seek to demonstrate *sukses* through rituals or achievements which are at odds with modernist Islam. Chapter 7 further explores how modernist Islam is related to status in Boneoge.

5.2.3 Social connections

Fostering strong social relations with other villagers, including kin, is necessary in order to be considered to have achieved *sukses*. That is, someone who has achieved wealth but does not have good social relations would not be considered to have achieved great *sukses*. Their social isolation would be considered a failing which would render them an inappropriate model for emulation. The model of *sukses* which people seek to emulate is a big man who is well known and well liked amongst Boneoge people. The big men of Boneoge are all well connected with the Boneoge community, both in their migration locations and in Boneoge itself. They have successfully managed their social relations in such a way that they are central to events both in Boneoge and in their *rantau*

(migration locations). Many of them in fact play an important role in integrating Boneoge with the diaspora communities.

As people achieve higher levels of *sukses* they typically foster good social relations in a number of ways. Staying in contact with the Boneoge community is important. A migrant who does not keep in contact with the home village or with Boneoge people in a migration location is seen to be remiss. Big men usually maintain relations with the Boneoge community either by frequently returning to the village or by playing an important role in the diaspora community where they work. The Boneoge people with the most *sukses* in Ambon, for instance, act as lynchpins holding together the Boneoge diaspora community there. Their residences are focal points for the Boneoge community, and they frequently organise events where Boneoge people can meet.

Holding ceremonies or rituals is an important method of building and measuring good social relations. While the number of invitees and the quality of the food show the extent of one's wealth, the number of invitees who actually attend acts as an indirect measure of the strength of the host's social relationships and thus his or her *sukses*.[190] The big men of Boneoge tend to hold large ceremonies and celebrations, which are usually well attended.

Maintaining good relations with one's own kin requires satisfying (at least some of) the hopes and expectations of kin with regard to sharing and assisting. As someone begins to achieve *sukses*, demands for sharing and assistance will be made on them. As they are clearly able to assist, failing to do so would render them morally culpable, and their social relations would suffer as a result. People who become models of *sukses* have managed to maintain good social relations with kin by meeting certain expectations of assistance from them.

People with *sukses* often extend assistance outside of their close kin, to neighbours and other friends. Through such assistance over long periods, relations of patronage are built up, and these in fact are the main conduit for establishing strong social relations. I have already remarked upon the prevalence and importance of patronage relations in Boneoge (and in Buton in general);

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[190] As an example, when my neighbour held an *alano fotu* ('the taking of the hair', or first haircut) ceremony for his twin grandsons, he afterwards commented in a satisfied tone that 'I think everyone who I invited came'.

broad patronage networks are a part of *sukses*. Patron-client relations can be built through lending or giving funds to others, who will then provide loyalty and other forms of service such as assistance during preparations for ceremonies. Through this sort of aid, Boneoge migrants in Ambon tend to become associated with the 'orbit' of one or another of the big men there. Clients are quick to point out, in discussions about their lives in Ambon, that they were 'close' to Haji X or that Haji Y helped them a lot.

Perhaps the primary method of building strong patronage networks is through providing livelihoods for young men. Migrants who experience some *sukses* typically make sure to hire Boneoge people when they need assistants, usually summoning unemployed people out from the home village to the migration location. The more young people one is able to provide work for, the more one's perceived *sukses* increases; Haji Kati and Haji Ara employ dozens. The generous financial support which many big men give to village projects is another form of patronage which augments their perceived *sukses*.

5.2.4 Autonomy

Autonomy is an important part of the *sukses* to which young Boneoge people aspire. Some aspects of autonomy were described in Chapter 4, including the desire to be financially independent and to live in a house of one's own. Boneoge people also desire autonomy in their work. The big men who have achieved *sukses* are all the masters of their respective businesses, coming and going as they see fit, taking holidays when they want to, and taking orders from no one. Being autonomous contributes to one's status, and it is particularly important in the 'big man' model of *sukses*.

A drive for autonomy is evident in the occupational choices of Boneoge men. In much of Indonesia, being a civil servant or joining the military is the ideal job; Rodenburg found that Batak people, for instance, considered a salaried job the 'ultimate ideal of happiness' (1997: 150). However, this is not the case for Boneoge people, as La Ode Taate explained to me, 'in Boneoge, it is rare that someone wants to join the army or become a civil servant - everyone wants to be a trader' (incidentally he himself had been about to sign up for the army once,

years ago in Ambon, but his parents sent an urgent letter forbidding him to do so).

Even those who cannot be traders still tend to prefer jobs with autonomy over jobs with less autonomy but steady wages. After returning to Boneoge as a refugee from the 1999 Ambon riots, one man worked for a while as a pedicab driver in Baubau, an extremely arduous, low-paying and uncertain job. He told me, 'driving a pedicab is good because nobody tells you what to do'. Another returnee from Ambon was unemployed, and told me, 'many have offered to employ me in a store, in Ambon and Papua, but I do not want to be ordered around ... many people are like that here.'

Early migrations by young men are often explicitly motivated by the desire to 'become independent' (*mandiri*). La Rau's father was a fisherman in Boneoge, and La Rau used to go fishing with him. But as soon as he finished primary school in Boneoge, La Rau left for Ambon where he joined his brother and sold cigarettes. When I asked him why he had done this, he said, 'in order to become independent'. Still, La Rau was initially dependent on his brother in Ambon for employment. A young man's first goal in migration, then, seems to be to become independent of his parents. Early on he may accept assistance from uncles or other relatives (see Chapter 6), but the desire for autonomy gets stronger as a man ages. As he passes through stages of his life, getting married and having children, he will be less willing to continue working beneath others or through the assistance of others.

The mechanism behind this gradual change is shame. The capacity to feel shame (*malu*, BM: *maia*) is seen as a necessary component of acting appropriately in society, similar to Errington's explanation of shame in Bugis culture; having a sense of shame means having the 'capacity to feel embarrassment, respect, and social humbleness' (1989: 145). It is not shameful for a young man to accept assistance from older relatives in finding employment, but as men marry and have children (and thus gain status), there is increasing shame associated with being in a dependent working relationship. There is also shame associated with not earning very much money, but it seems that the shame of dependency rises with age until, for many, it surpasses the shame of poverty. Thus young men might attempt various kin-assisted employment endeavours, but

older men, if they have not had the good fortune to accumulate capital and achieve *sukses*, often settle into some kind of low-earning but independent work (such as fishing or small scale trading).

The connection between migration, autonomy, and entrepreneurship is likely to have been powerful amongst seafaring populations since the early years of the Butonese polity. Reid, discussing Bugis seafarers, writes that 'there was clearly a connection between this individual entrepreneurship and the attachment to an ideology of freedom, both of which were well established in the eighteenth century' (1998: 147-8). The Bugis, also, continue to value independence highly (Pelras 1998: 25; see also Lineton 1975a: 184).

In many ways Boneoge men imagine their lives as a quest to achieve autonomy and good fortune. They set out, usually on migrations, to become independent adults, and, if things go well, wealthy as well. Parents want to marry their daughters to such men. This journey is conveyed in a Butonese song called *Broken Hearted* (BW: *Yinca Motobori*).[191] This song tells of a young man who is about to depart on a ship, leaving behind his sweetheart. Since the girl's parents have not accepted him, he goes away to try to become 'successful', so that he can come back and be allowed to marry his sweetheart.

Sapaangkana fajara	As the sun rises
Sarumarana kainawa	through the haze
Eku bakemo pangaawa	I unfurl the sails
Beku hela eku patondu lipu	about to sail away from the village
Sakonduuna tawa-tawa mohelana	the gong will sound
Tandainamo beku lingkamo	to mark my departure
Neu kamata pangaawa mohelana	if you see my boat's sail
Boli u tangisiaku	don't cry for me
Lingkaku syi kupeelo torampeaku	I go to find a new life
Beku sintomu eto peulusaku	I will find my sanctuary
E waoti kaasi beku kiako	my love, what am I to do with you?
Kaasi mini penamiku ahancurumo	my heart is broken
Kugora-gora teduka ku batata	I beseech and I pray
Arasalana te kaasina kawasa	that God will assist me
Eu sintomu layjo bula masasa	One day I'll return a man of *sukses*
Ipeeluna mancuanamu	who will be accepted by your parents

The expression which I translated as 'a man of *sukses*' (on the advice of a Wolio informant) was '*bula masasa*', a metaphor referring to a nearly full moon.

[191] This song was written by a noble of Baubau, in the Wolio language, during the 1980s. Some such pop songs are said to be adaptations of older folk songs.

'*Sukses*', then, is imagined as the waxing of the moon, where a man reaches proper adulthood, becoming 'whole' or 'full' when he is financially independent. Since the young man must achieve financial autonomy in order to marry his sweetheart, the quest for *sukses* is a part of his journey towards marriage and thus adulthood. In Buton, as in Indonesia in general, a person is not really considered an adult until they are married. Once significant *sukses* is attained, a man is expected to support those around him, just as a full moon shines light on other objects.[192]

Boneoge people desire both financial autonomy and autonomy in their occupations, i.e. being able to work without having someone telling them what to do. The big men of Boneoge have achieved this by any measure. As traders who run their own ventures, they make all the business decisions and they have complete control over their own personal lives. An additional benefit of this autonomy is that they are in a position to extend patronage to others. A drawback of working as a soldier, civil servant, or company employee is that even though one might earn a stable living, one exists within an administrative structure and it can be difficult (and illegal) to dispense patronage. A trader with enough financial success, on the other hand, can lend money and hire young relatives, extending his webs of patronage within the Boneoge community, and thereby being recognised as having achieved a high degree of *sukses*.

5.3 Social Impacts of Economic Changes

The economic changes in Boneoge have come about through new migration opportunities in Ambon, Papua, and Hawaii, and have had a host of effects on Boneoge social life. Here I discuss three important aspects of social relations

[192] The song also hints at other connections between *sukses* and migration. It conveys a conceptualisation of life as a search for *sukses* undertaken through migration, represented in the song by a dramatic departure from the home village on a sailing ship, setting out on the seas hoping to find a 'new life' and a 'sanctuary'. The search for *sukses* is understood metaphorically as an ocean voyage; uncertain and dangerous, but with some possibility of good fortune. The migrant prays that God will assist him, acknowledging that he does not have control over his fate, that the achievement of *sukses* is by no means certain. The word translated as 'a new life', *torampeaku*, is literally 'my place of being cast ashore'. The sea journey will end with the sailor being cast ashore somewhere, and the search for *sukses* will end with the migrant achieving some as yet unknown level of *sukses*. The fact that the man must achieve *sukses* elsewhere before returning to Buton to marry his sweetheart hints at the importance of endogamous marriage (see Chapter 6).

which relate to these economic developments. First, I discuss how economic inequalities affect social relations within families. Second, I discuss how Boneoge people understand the struggle for *sukses*, and the social challenges involved in attempting to accumulate capital. Third, I discuss the changing ideology of work which lies behind the drive to achieve wealth and *sukses*.

5.3.1 Social relations between rich and poor kin: kin-distancing

Wealth disparities in Boneoge have strong impacts upon social relations, including those between kin. New economic opportunities have led to huge wealth inequalities in the village, but kinship relations bind the villagers together; how do families deal with wealth inequalities between relatives? Given that demands for assistance from kin are likely to impinge upon efforts by aspiring traders to accumulate capital, how is it that anyone manages to accumulate capital or become wealthy, while still retaining good social relations? I have already explained how the form of patronage offered by those traders who are achieving *sukses* is likely to consist of providing opportunities for young relatives to work with them in the *rantau*. This allows them to discharge responsibilities for assisting kin in a way which does not compromise their own efforts to build a successful business. A second way in which this tension between assisting and accumulating is resolved is through what I call '**kin-distancing**'.

Kin-distancing involves the attenuation of social relations between kin of vastly different levels of wealth. That is, when there is a large gap in wealth between close relatives, their relationship tends to be de-emphasised by both parties. It is considered bad form for poor relatives to impose on their richer relatives under certain conditions. The wealthier relative will also tend not to visit their poorer relative. This distance introduced into the relationship acts to reduce the burden of sharing on the richer relatives, and thus reduces the tension associated with such disparities within families. Some of the wealthiest 'big

men' in the village have siblings who are among the poorest in the village. The crucial element which makes this possible is shame.[193]

A Boneoge man, who had returned after the Ambon riots with few possessions and set up house in the poor neighbourhood of Matoka, explained that he felt his wealthier relatives were not interested in having a relationship with him due to his poverty:

> If you are rich, you have relatives. If you are poor like us here, then you don't have relatives. We do have relatives in Boneoge but they don't acknowledge us. Poor people are considered unimportant [*dipandang enteng*] – so we are estranged [*baku pisah*] from them.

In fact most members of the community of Matoka were seen as poor and were subject to kin-distancing, as their relatives in Boneoge proper wanted little to do with them. A concrete example of the tensions between kinship and wealth/status disparities occurred at my own wedding celebration. I had invited a large group of Matoka people, as well as many friends from Boneoge proper, to attend a reception in the town of Baubau. Several Matoka people later reported to me that their presence at the event had been questioned; people had said to them 'oh, you came too, eh?' in a tone which indicated reproach. A group of women from Matoka sat in the front row, and were reprimanded by a powerful Boneoge man, who told them, 'this place is not for you, it is for the bosses'.[194] One of the Matoka women was this man's sister-in-law. After she told me what had happened, she exclaimed 'that was from my own brother-in-law!', expressing anger that family relations counted for so little compared to wealth and status.

Wealthy people generally do not visit poorer people in Boneoge. Given that I was perceived to be a wealthy and high status person (due to my education and being a foreigner), many people who considered themselves poor expressed surprise when I was willing to visit them. The fact that I was willing to climb up their ladders and sit comfortably in their simple woven-walled hut made me, in

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[193] Kin-distancing occurs when kin possess vastly different levels of wealth, and since wealth is such an important component of *sukses*, it would also be accurate to say that kin-distancing occurs between kin with vastly different levels of *sukses*.

[194] Seating at public events normally reflects hierarchy, with those of highest status (the 'bosses') sitting in the front row. The seats in the front row are often special cushioned chairs as opposed to the plastic chairs used for general seating.

their eyes, 'not arrogant'. Perhaps this explained why some people in Boneoge proper seemed to object to my frequent visits to Matoka; my visits to the houses of those at the bottom of the social hierarchy may have somehow seemed to question this hierarchy.

Those who are poor also refrain from visiting their wealthier relatives. One of my neighbours lived within 100 meters of two of her brothers, both of whom were significantly better off than she was. I never saw her visit their houses. When I asked her about this, she said 'we are ashamed, afraid'. It is shameful for poor relatives to emphasise their connection to their rich relatives or to visit them. Upon further prodding, she added, in an almost word-for-word echo of the Matoka man's statement above, 'if you have money, you have many relatives – if you are poor, you don't have any.'

Another man explained his reluctance to visit wealthier relatives like this: 'they are 'haves', and we are 'have-nots'...I don't want to go to rich people's houses; if something goes missing, I will be suspected'. It is telling that although he was talking about his own relatives, he referred to them as 'rich people' rather than 'my rich relatives'; the fact that they were rich seemed to overshadow the kinship relation. Whether or not rich relatives worry about poor relatives actually stealing from them, his statement expresses a discomfort with wealth disparities between close kin; this discomfort expresses a tension between individual accumulation and assisting kin. A Boneoge woman, who was born and raised in Ambon but returned to Boneoge in 1999, put it this way:

> People here are afraid, they don't want to know us. They are afraid that their wealth will be taken...that they will have to feed us. My mother wanted to introduce me around to our relatives in Boneoge proper, but I didn't want that, because of their attitudes....It's better just to assume we are newcomers here.

Selective 'activation' of kin relations is common in the societies of the region. People are not uniformly close with all relatives but rather pick and choose which ones to maintain close relations with based on factors such as personality compatibility, opportunistic considerations, and status disparities. Lineton described something similar to kin-distancing amongst the Bugis of South Sulawesi:

> If a man holds too exalted a position, his kin may feel too siri' (shy or ashamed) to try to activate the relationship. Thus one kinswoman of the

> Camat (subdistrict head) of Maniangpajo told me she had never talked to him; she was 'afraid of him, because we are ordinary people' (Lineton 1975a: 56).

Note that the sense of 'afraid' here is less 'primal fear' and more 'respect due to superior social standing' (see Chapter 8). Another description of something similar to kin-distancing comes from Broch, writing about Bonerate, a nearby island in the Flores Sea:

> Members outside the narrow lineal grandparents and lineal grandchildren are often considered distant relatives. It would be most disrespectful of a poor cousin to make her/his kin-ties publicly relevant in interaction with a prominent relative. And individuals of a relatively high socio-economic position normally avoid mentioning kinship relations to distant poor kinsmen (Broch 1983: 145-6).

Broch describes both poor and rich relatives de-emphasising kinship relations due to economic disparities. However, while he says that this applies to 'distant poor kinsmen', in Boneoge kin-distancing occurs between close kinsmen including siblings.

I have mentioned the importance of assistance from kin in enabling young men to find work during their migrations. Young men often avail themselves of assistance from well-off uncles or aunts, and this is quite acceptable to all parties. The shame which drives kin-distancing tends to come into play after a man is married and has been working for some time. At this stage of his life, it becomes increasingly shameful to have to depend on others for his livelihood, and the shame of requesting any kind of assistance from wealthier relatives grows. Thus while it is acceptable for a young man to use relatives as they seek lucrative migrations, older men tend to be distanced from wealthier kin, and to accept their economic 'lot' in life.

Although shame might lead poor people to refrain from asking for assistance from wealthier relatives, this does not mean that they feel happy about the situation. Many of the people in Matoka complained bitterly that their relatives did not offer them any assistance. It was common for Matoka people to point out that 'our neighbours in Ambon helped us more than our kin do here'. While Boneoge people perhaps viewed them as poor relatives, they considered themselves to be victims of a disaster (the riots) which caused them to lose their

wealth. They thus portrayed their relatives as being neglectful in not assisting them.

To summarise, while the young receive assistance from kin in establishing livelihoods, with age comes shame at receiving assistance, and kin-distancing increasingly marks relations between relatives of unequal wealth. A person with *sukses*, then, can discharge responsibilities to kin by assisting some young relatives, and beyond that are free to build patronage networks as they see fit.

5.3.2 The Struggle to accumulate capital

After a young man leaves school, he will be under some pressure to find a job. This often involves migration, and his parents are likely to actively seek assistance from relatives in finding work opportunities for their son (and sometimes for daughters also). Men who are young, not working, and in Boneoge are seen as lazy and lacking initiative. In a sense anyone who is not working is in a continual state of shame. This motivates young men to migrate, both because it is easier to find work elsewhere and in order to avoid this sense of shame. In other words being unemployed in Ambon is less uncomfortable than being unemployed in Boneoge where they are under the evaluative gaze of their relatives.

Shame motivates young men not to return to Boneoge unless they have achieved some degree of *sukses*, usually meaning that they have gainful employment and are able to begin accumulating capital. This was evident in a comment from a young migrant in Baubau, who was talking about leaving Buton and not returning until he had found *sukses*:

> As a migrant you want to 'succeed' before returning to Buton, so that you are not ashamed...if you come back and forth to Buton, people think that you don't have a job. If you are not working, you are ignored by your relatives when in Buton – they don't talk to you.

How do Butonese people go about trying to succeed? Boneoge people frequently described the importance of diligence and a willingness to work low status jobs, and contrasted themselves in this regard with the Ambonese, who they see as lazy and only interested in (high status) civil service jobs. This accords with the well-known model of the migrant putting in long hours at low

paying and dirty jobs in order to improve his or her life. One Boneoge migrant described the different work ethics he had observed while farming in Ambon:

> Those Ambonese, if they get enough food for today, they rest. If they make a garden, it is small, only for their food. Butonese people would make gardens the size of Matoka. When growing cassava, Butonese people weed two or three times, the Ambonese just once. The Ambonese work from 6 until 9 or 10, and then go home. Then they work again from 4 to 6 in the afternoon. Butonese people work all day with only an hour for lunch, without caring about the heat.

Migrants' stories frequently explained how Ambonese people looked down on the Butonese as they had low status jobs as labourers, porters, and pedicab (*becak*) drivers. Their trading in the fish market is considered dirty and undesirable by many in Ambon. Migrants, however, valorise hard work, and frequently tell stories about how lowly *becak* drivers working in Ambon were eventually able to build fancy houses from their hard work, while the Ambonese people who had looked down on them continued to live in simple houses as they were unable to save money. This suggests that migrants see their struggle as a moral victory, where they withstand moral approbation and eventually win the day by achieving *sukses*.

Many Boneoge migrants who worked in Ambon described the key to success as the ability to save some of the money they earned. The practice of saving some of your earnings was described as a Butonese trait, in contrast to the Ambonese who spent everything they earned. It was this difference which made the Butonese steadily increase their wealth. According to one migrant, 'Butonese people in Ambon have expensive houses, cars, clove crops. They have succeeded. [Ambonese people] eat and party, they sell their land. Butonese people are good at saving their money.' I asked a middle aged man, who had returned after several decades of living in Ambon, what it takes to succeed. He responded,

> To be a successful migrant, there are two things: you must fit in with the situation [*menyesuaikan diri*], and you must be able to 'eat' only half of your earnings, and put half away. A Butonese labourer can have a house with tiled floors. How can they do it? It's because if he earns 100, he only eats 50.

> Ambonese people spend it all. If we meet them in the street, they are disgusted at us, but our houses have tiled floors.[195]

In this comment we see again the emphasis on tolerating low status jobs in order to slowly accumulate wealth and eventually overtake the Ambonese in terms of quality of housing. The shame at having a lowly job is expiated by the high status brought by the good quality house. In fact most Boneoge people believed that the 1999 riots were motivated by envy on the part of the Ambonese after the Butonese had achieved *sukses* in Ambon.

It is acknowledged, though, that many Boneoge migrants in fact fail to save money. Those who do, however, are able to 'improve' their lives, whether by building a concrete house, buying better nets with which to fish,[196] or by accumulating capital and starting a new business.[197] Most people desire to become wealthy traders, and to do this one must begin by accumulating capital. Accumulating capital is of such importance in Boneoge that it may be said to be an obsession.[198]

Capital has been important to Boneoge livelihoods for some time. During the 'sailing era' (see Chapter 3), those who joined an expedition would typically contribute capital to purchase goods, and thus sail as trading partners rather than as employees. Those who did not contribute capital could join the expedition as crew (ABK, for '*anak buah kapal*'), but ABK earned much less than those who invested capital in the venture, and were confined to a position of subservience and low status compared to them.[199] 'ABK', in Boneoge, has the sense of 'underling' or 'subordinate', and the term continues to be used to describe all

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[195] Tiled floors are a sign of wealth since they are more comfortable and more costly than concrete floors.

[196] Many migrants have used their savings from migration to buy fishing equipment for use in Boneoge. Although fishing in Boneoge is generally a low status occupation because of its low returns, fishers who use a *dhari kafolanto* (BM: drift net) can earn a significant amount – enough to 'improve (*maju*) their lives', as one informant put it. About Rp5 million (US$550) is needed in order to buy the nets and boat engine needed.

[197] For 'capital', people used the Indonesian word '*modal*'.

[198] Working for a wage is seen as less desirable than engaging in enterprise with one's own capital. On one occasion I asked a friend to help me study *bahasa* Muna and offered to pay him for his time. He agreed to teach me but refused payment for his time, saying that he preferred to earn his money through investing his own capital. This clearly ties in with the high value placed on autonomy, discussed in the previous section.

[199] Pelras has written that the Bugis terms *punggawa* and *sawi*, originally meaning 'ship's captain' and 'crew member' respectively, have come to stand for patron-client relations in general (cited in Meereboer 1998: 254).

sorts of (non-sailing) work arrangements, to refer to assistants who do not contribute capital to a venture, such as younger relatives who assist a trader in selling his goods.[200]

Some migrations are oriented towards obtaining capital, while others are oriented towards trading using that capital. During the 1970s and 1980s, migrants seeking to accumulate capital would go to Ambon to take advantage of the plentiful job opportunities, and those with capital would either stay in Ambon or go to Papua (a few returned to Buton to trade). Since the 1990s, Hawaii has emerged as the best migration for accumulating capital, although some still go on migrations to Ambon to accumulate capital. Those with capital are usually oriented towards Papua now, because the markets are seen as too competitive in Ambon. A migrant returned from Ambon explained, 'you can accumulate capital in Ambon, but in Buton you can only trade if you already have capital[201]...people go to Ambon first, and then when they have capital, they go on to Papua.'

The ease of earning money in Ambon was in fact instrumental in ending the sailing era in Boneoge. During the sailing years, the system of profit-splitting was skewed towards the owner of capital in Boneoge more so than in some other parts of the archipelago (see Section 3.2), suggesting that capital in Boneoge was scarce and highly valued. Those without capital, the ABK, earned little. When jobs in Ambon became more available in the 1970s, Boneoge men became unwilling to work as ABK and the sailing era ended.

The emergence of the Hawaii migrations in the late 1990s enabled young men to obtain huge amounts of capital during short periods of time, for two reasons. First, the salaries were very high, and became higher during the 1997 economic crisis. Second, the salaries are delivered in such a way as to facilitate accumulation. Half of the salary is delivered in a lump sum at the end of the

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[200] Social relations between ABK and boss are heavily influenced by this hierarchical relationship – this is one reason why older siblings rarely work as an 'ABK' for younger ones; their relative status would be unclear since one is the older sibling but the other is the boss.

[201] If indeed it is true that Boneoge people can trade without capital in Ambon but not in Buton, there may be several explanations. It could be that the slow turnover of goods in Buton makes consignment trading unattractive for the owner of the goods. It could also be that Boneoge people lack networks of trust amongst traders in Buton – meaning in the markets of the district capital of Baubau.

contract, meaning that in effect the employer saves the money on behalf of the employee. This temporarily frees the migrant from the social tensions associated with saving money in a communal society. At the end of a two year contract, a Hawaii boy would receive a pay packet sufficient to immediately start a business (or build a house).

A key characteristic of these new employment opportunities – in both Ambon and Hawaii – is that they enabled Boneoge men to work and accumulate capital without depending on Boneoge structures of authority to the extent that the sailing jobs did. Obtaining jobs as ABK on sailing ships depended on maintaining good relations with the ship captains and owners, who were powerful men in Boneoge. In Ambon, many employment options were available which did not depend on assistance from powerful Boneoge people (although some did). Hawaii migrations are even more outside of the control of Boneoge elites. This broader access to wealth has affected social relations in Boneoge (see Chapter 8).

There is a tension between accumulating and sharing with kin; on the one hand people are involved in a struggle to accumulate capital, but on the other hand there are social obligations to assist kin when possible. As in any place where increasing economic disparities are found within groups of close kin, how the tension between sharing and accumulating is managed is important for both social relations and for economic development. In Boneoge, loans from kin can help people to start a migration, but demands from kin for loans can also make it difficult for one to accumulate capital.

People rarely lend enough money for someone to get started as a clothes trader in Papua; more often, people seek loans in order to begin a migration to Ambon or to Hawaii. The most common source of money for would-be migrants is their parents. If a young man's parents do not have available funds, they might seek to obtain money from their other children. The young man's siblings might also give him money directly, most often if they are summoning him to join them in a *rantau*; in this case they will often pay his travel costs. Such transfers between parents and children are normally not considered loans and do not need to be paid back. If the parents are unable to obtain money from their other

children, they might ask their own siblings for money; this is likely to be a loan which requires repayment.

Loans are more likely to be extended when the borrower is assured of a job with good pay, since this will render it more likely that the loan will be repaid promptly. This is the case for Hawaii migrations, where the wages are substantial, regular, and well-known. However, shame sometimes deters people from requesting loans, even from close kin, as described in the previous section.

Kin-distancing, however, does not remove all pressure to lend to kin, and it remains a challenge to accumulate capital or run a successful business while maintaining good social relations with kin.[202] Just as one can benefit from kin relations (through loans or assisted migrations), so can they become a burden. One solution to deal with these pressures is to leave Boneoge. A middle aged man told me that he wanted to establish a *rantau* for his children, and that he was considering Merauke, in Papua. I asked him if it was because the economy was better in Merauke than in Buton. He replied that the economy was not the issue, saying, 'It is because here, if you are a trader, people buy on credit, and because of that you go bankrupt, you can't get ahead ... elsewhere, when you sell something you get money right away.'

Going on a migration, then, can be a strategy to negotiate the tension between the desire to accumulate capital, or to run a successful business, and the need to fulfil one's social obligations by lending (or extending credit) to relatives and friends. The difficulty of trying to run a trading business in Boneoge amidst demands for credit from friends and relatives was experienced by a man living in Matoka. When I arrived in Boneoge in 2001, he had a small shop operating out of his house, having started the business using government aid money he had received as a refugee from Ambon, but within a year or so he had gone out of business. Echoing the quote above, he explained, 'I was forced to close it,

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[202] The implications of the need to balance tensions between sharing and accumulating are far-reaching. When someone wants to build a house, often they first purchase the main structural beams, then the wall planks (or sacks of cement for a concrete house), roofing iron, and so on, finally assembling the house once all of the necessary materials are prepared. In this way, they can invest their earnings into house materials over time, thus avoiding the social tensions which would accompany the accumulation of any large amount of cash. While building a house can be accomplished in this way, negotiating these tensions while accumulating capital for trade is more problematic.

because people didn't pay their debts. I couldn't call in the debts...people would forget, or argue with me about it ... now my capital is gone.'

This is a common complaint amongst traders in Boneoge. Running a trading business from a location far from Boneoge seems to be one way to alleviate demands from kin. Although in many cases migrants continue to assist kin from Boneoge, it seems to be that the demands are even more onerous when one remains in Boneoge. Still, few Boneoge migrants seek total isolation from Boneoge diaspora communities, suggesting that the benefits of being close to (at least some) kin outweigh the burdens.

In view of the social duties to assist kin, it can be said that there is an ambivalence towards saving money and accumulating capital: one should save, but one should not neglect one's social duties in doing so. People with *sukses*, such as the *mieno nobhala*, have managed to maintain good relations with their kin and with the community in general, while at the same time developing their businesses.

5.3.3 The Moral judgment of labour

Lying behind the struggle to accumulate capital, and differential achievement of *sukses* among Boneoge people, are two alternate models of how to live, work, and strive. Values of industriousness and frugality have become central concerns amongst some Boneoge people but not others. Although migration has been influential in exposing Boneoge people to these values, the changes occurring in Boneoge are also related to broader processes such as urbanisation, 'globalisation', the ever-expanding reach of capitalism, and the spread of Islamic morality and New Order 'development' ideology. I describe these two alternate models as 'ideal types', without claiming that people completely follow one or the other style. Rather, people tend to exhibit a mix of behaviour from each type, and their behaviour changes over time, although some people do conform quite closely to one of the two styles. I describe them as two separate styles in order to clarify important ideological differences which exist in the village.

On the one hand are what I call the '*continuous savers*', who tend to work as much as possible, regardless of how much money they have. They place importance on steady accumulation of money in order to 'grow', 'advance', or

'improve their lives', through the building of a larger house or the expansion of a trading business. On the other hand are the '*cyclical spenders*', who work until they have a certain amount of earnings, and then take a break until those earnings are spent. Cyclical spenders never accumulate significant capital, since whenever they accumulate a little they stop working.

La Uru, a Matoka resident, is a limestone miner. He told me 'If I sell a pile [of limestone], I take a holiday until the money is gone'. Clearly La Uru is not trying to work continuously in order to accumulate capital as quickly as possible. This pattern of intermittent work has a long history in Boneoge. Farmers in Boneoge had a variable pattern of work, very busy at planting and harvesting time and relatively inactive in between (these periods were used for sailing ventures or migrations to Ambon). The lifestyle of sailors, too, was characterised by months-long sea journeys followed by months of residence in Boneoge during which time they earned little, instead doing a little gardening and fishing, or resting. Many informants described how sailors often waited until all their previous earnings were depleted before departing on another voyage. A similar style was common during migrations to Ambon; after a few months of working in Ambon, men would return to Boneoge for a break.

La Mula, born around 1940 in Mawaruanu (in the hills above Boneoge), has lived according to this style since 1957 when he first went on migration to Ambon. He worked as a labourer, and when he had accumulated enough money, he would go home to Boneoge. He spent part of his earnings on his travel back to Boneoge, and he handed the remainder over to his wife upon arrival. He then stayed in Boneoge until this money was spent before going back to Ambon. Since the 1999 riots he has stayed in Boneoge, and works on and off at a variety of occupations such as fishing (with a line), labouring (when someone summons him to work), and gardening. He has a very simple shack for a house.

'Continuous savers', on the other hand, do not wait until their earnings are spent before working again. During the 1970s, Boneoge people who migrated to Ambon with their families had the opportunity to work continuously without the need to return frequently to Boneoge. Foregoing the trips home enabled the migrant to keep working and to avoid paying the expensive travel costs, making it easier to save money. Living in Ambon city meant that they were exposed to

the ideology of an urban modernity in which accumulation could be a key to social mobility. Continuous savers are distinguished not only by their industriousness but also by their frugality. That is, they do not spend large amounts on clothes and food, but rather save their money for improving their houses, accumulating capital or expanding their trading businesses.

The continuous saver / cyclical spender division does not map on to the trader/non-trader one; that is, not all traders are continuous savers, and not all continuous savers are traders. For instance, amongst limestone miners, some, like La Uru above, are cyclical spenders, while others worked every day from dawn until dusk, seven days a week, regardless of whether they had sold piles of limestone.[203] Similarly, some traders take breaks when they have some money, while others are continually striving to increase their capital and expand their businesses.

In terms of status considerations, the important point to make here is that it has become increasingly common for Boneoge people to express negative moral judgments of the cyclical spender style. This indicates that the ideology of continuous accumulation is spreading, and the continuous saver style is becoming increasingly embedded in local values.

According to continuous savers, to spend long periods without working indicates laziness, which is a moral failing.[204] I have already described how Boneoge migrants tend to describe Ambonese people as lazy because of their working style; many apply this same label to Boneoge people who do not work continuously. The wife of La Mula, a cyclical spender I described above, complained to me that since he rests after earning some money, they are continually lacking.

Cyclical spenders of course do not appreciate being considered morally deficient for their working style, and instead see the two styles as just different, without one being more virtuous than the other. They acknowledge that that they

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[203] Many of these limestone mining continuous savers lived in Matoka, and were attempting to accumulate funds to built concrete houses to replace the wooden huts which they built after returning from the 1999 Ambon riots. Many of them had accomplished this by 2003.

[204] This hints at connections between morality and economic development suggestive of Weber. In Chapter 7, when discussing modernist Islam and the rise of trading livelihoods in Boneoge, I touch on the applicability of Weber's ideas regarding connections between religious ideology and capitalism.

do not have *sukses*, and even acknowledge the desirability of attaining *sukses*, but are not doing what is necessary in order to achieve it. Where continuous savers might explain this by pointing to their laziness, unwise spending, and lack of 'ambition', cyclical spenders are more likely to shrug and say, 'it's not my fate to have *sukses*'. They might point out that not all continuous savers achieve *sukses* – it still depends on fate.

Another example of moral judgment comes from the daughter of Hamadi, a cyclical spender who returned to Boneoge after the 1999 riots. He engaged in line fishing locally, and also had children in his house who could support him. One of his daughters complained to me about his working style:

> We try to encourage him to sell kerosene, or something. Other men migrate again before their money is all gone. But my father didn't, he waited until all the money was gone before migrating. He has not succeeded...he has a weak mind.

Hamadi's cyclical spender style is seen here as indicative of a 'weak mind'. With a 'strong mind', on the other hand, one would work constantly, accumulate money, and achieve *sukses*. Hamadi was a sailor in his early years, and then became a fish trader in Ambon. He told me that after a sailing voyage, he would stay in Boneoge until his earnings were spent, and only then depart again. In other words he retained the cyclical spender style throughout his working years, even though he did convert from a life of sailing to settled fish trading in Ambon. With the rise of the continuous saver model, and the moral rejection of the cyclical spender model, people like Hamadi are looked down upon, and this lowers his status in the community.

Unwise spending, the other characteristic of cyclical spenders, is also subject to moral criticism. For instance, Hawaii boys are often criticised for their 'wasteful' habit of spending much of their earnings on partying once they return from overseas. In order to prevent this, it has become common practice for the mothers and wives of Hawaii boys to travel to Jakarta in order to meet the returning Hawaii boys and immediately take possession of the end-of-contract pay packet. Once the women control the money, it is more likely to be used 'wisely' for such things as building houses and providing capital for trading.

Similarly, many people lament that there is nothing left of the huge earnings from the Singapore years; rather than being invested, the money was spent. As one man said, 'we don't see any effects of the money from Singapore....people spent and spent until it was gone before going to earn more. That means they will not grow.[205] La Agi, a Boneoge teacher, explained further:

> The Singapore years were the golden age of Boneoge, but people did not accumulate capital...and neither did we when we were migrating to Ambon. It is only recently that people have begun to be good at accumulating capital. When they returned from a voyage to Singapore, they would just bring kitchen wares for their own use, not for trade. Wanci people would buy cargoes in Singapore for the return trip. Lakudo people also have the entrepreneurial spirit [*jiwa pedagang*], they often worked in the fish market in Ambon but would get out quickly...Boneoge people stay there.

According to La Agi, Boneoge people were not good at accumulating capital, and lacked the 'entrepreneurial spirit' (or *dhiwano podagano* in *bahasa* Muna), during both the sailing era and the Ambon era. La Agi sees the prevalence of Boneoge people working in the fish market as a sign of the inability to accumulate capital in order to move on to better things (such as the 'entrepreneur' stage). What La Agi refers to as the 'entrepreneurial spirit' presumably includes the industriousness, frugality, and urge for expansion which characterise the continuous savers.[206]

This section has outlined some of the ideological changes surrounding the struggle to accumulate capital and to achieve *sukses*. The drive to accumulate capital is widespread and strong in Boneoge, but people have 'converted' to the capitalist model of industriousness, frugality, and accumulation to different degrees. Those who have not 'converted' to this ideology are now to some extent judged to be morally deficient, and this lowers their status and the status of their lifestyles. The ideological shifts described here further prioritise the '*sukses*' model of status exemplified by the big men, at the expense of other models of high status.

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[205] I translated 'grow' from '*berkembang*'. The use of *berkembang*, which can also be translated as 'develop', taps into the capitalist and developmentalist discourse which underlies the continuous saver model.

[206] In *bahasa* Muna, to indicate that someone is rich, one can say *nohangkaya* (rich) or *nokolabhimo doinoa* (he/she has extra money). The latter phrase is interesting, as it implies that one can possess 'enough' money, since it is possible to have 'extra'. As the 'institutionalised greed' of the capitalist spirit takes hold more completely, one might expect that this term will lose its relevance (see Sahlins 1972).

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how new economic opportunities available to Boneoge migrants over the past decades have led to an exacerbation of wealth disparities in the village, and how these opportunities and disparities have had a host of impacts on status in Boneoge. The 'big men' of Boneoge became wealthy through trading, and now represent the example which most young men seek to emulate, having achieved what is called *sukses*. Although the word *sukses* is taken from the English 'success', *sukses* in Boneoge has both more of a social aspect and a more necessary financial one than the English equivalent. Social requirements for *sukses* include autonomy, a good moral and religious reputation, and strong social connections in the village including patronage networks. Autonomous traders such as the big men are well suited to achieve all of these things. They have managed to negotiate tensions between sharing and accumulating in such a way that their social relations remain strong even as they accumulate capital to expand their businesses. The patronage they distribute by employing young relatives provides them with trusted assistants in their businesses as well as satisfying social obligations to their kin. The most successful among them are the highest status men in the village.

One characteristic which is *not* common amongst the men with *sukses* is noble blood. It is likely that in the past it was nobles who had the opportunities to become wealthy big men. Membership in the *kaomu* or *walaka* noble estates used to be very important for holding leadership roles in the village administration. Such leaders used to occupy the positions of highest status in the village, would have had some control over village resources, and were known as rich men with many wives. But as the sultanate broke down during the early years of Indonesian independence, the *papara* (commoner) estate was officially liberated from the control of the nobility. Now, in Boneoge, there is little connection between *sukses* and nobility, and it is the big men, not the nobles, who have the highest status. Through the economic opportunities available to Boneoge migrants, wealth has become disentangled from structures of authority in the village; neither the nobles nor the older men monopolise these

opportunities. Young men can access significant income through the Hawaii migrations without depending on nobles, elders, or big men.

The notion of *sukses* corresponds to a new emphasis within the status system, on wealth rather than descent, on patronage rather than formal leadership positions, and on modernist Islam rather than traditional *adat* knowledge. In short, these shifts have prioritised the 'big man' model over that of the 'old man' model of high status.

These shifts in economic opportunities and wealth disparities have led to a host of social effects related to status. Relations between kin of different wealth often become distant. Hard work and saving have become increasingly valorised, with negative moral judgments attributed to those people who lack the drive to accumulate. These moral evaluations reinforce the *sukses* model of status. It can be expected that the 'continuous saver' model will continue to gain popularity over the 'cyclical spender' as the former takes inspiration from notions of modernity, capitalism, and developmentalism which are ever stronger.

The notion of *sukses* and the Boneoge style of migration are linked in a relationship of mutual formation. That is, not only do people migrate in certain ways in order to achieve (what they understand to constitute) *sukses*, but the notion of *sukses* itself is contingent upon examples of people who have achieved high status in Boneoge through their migrations. As trading has come to be the primary method of achieving *sukses*, so the trading ideology and lifestyle have become more intimately embedded in the notion of *sukses*. The current notion of *sukses* and how to achieve it supports an outward-looking worldview, in which *sukses* is to be found *outside* the village.

CHAPTER 6
KINSHIP AND PATRONAGE: KIN-BASED MIGRATION NETWORKS

This chapter explores the role of kinship in the struggle to achieve *sukses*. I argue that the rise of capitalism and lucrative migration opportunities has not been accompanied by a breakdown of institutions of patronage in Boneoge social and economic relations, nor a weakening of kinship ties. Rather, there have been shifts in the kinds of people who are able to provide patronage, in the form of that patronage, and in the role of kinship within patronage networks. Patronage networks no longer centre on semi-hereditary village leaders or people of high rank, but instead centre on successful traders who can provide kin-clients with employment opportunities – which in practice means migration opportunities. Kinship is the primary mechanism through which individuals seek migration opportunities, through the growth of what I call 'kin-based migration networks'. Migration networks assist migrants in the struggle for *sukses*, and also anchor migrants to the home community.

A significant portion of this chapter focuses on explaining the nature of Boneoge kin-based migration networks. This is partly to elucidate *how* kinship has been utilized in the quest for high status, and how things have changed over the past generation, as an important part of my overall argument about how the status system has changed. A second reason to detail the characteristics of these networks, however, relates to the dearth of information on them in the literature. The prevalence of Sulawesi migrants throughout eastern Indonesia is well known, and the importance of social and kin networks in determining both migration destination and labour market segmentation between ethnic populations has been recognised (Hugo 1997: 99). However, the practices, cultural norms and beliefs which sustain and guide the development of these networks have not been adequately described.

6.1 Boneoge Kinship and Patronage Structures

Butonese kinship is bilateral, with generation very important in distinguishing relatives but gender (of the intervening relative) not important (rank is patrilineal, but of much reduced importance in Boneoge today). Marriage tends to be village endogamous, even amongst Boneoge people living elsewhere (as explained in Section 6.2.2 below). Many people marry close neighbours in Boneoge; the result is residential kin clusters, where groups of kin live near each other and form the core of each other's social lives. Boneoge people do not maintain close social ties with all kin, instead developing intimate relations with those kin with whom they share residential proximity, emotional suitability or economic relations, as well as genealogical affinity.[207]

The importance of patron-client relations in Boneoge society was explained in Chapters 4 and 5. In Boneoge, patron-client relationships are not separable from kinship relations, but overlap them. That is, it is not the case that people have close relations with all their close kin, but rather close relationships are built with particular kin and not others, usually through patron-client relationships. People with *sukses* tend to have numerous patron-client relations with kin and others. The services offered by patrons often pertain to the livelihoods of the clients, and since most people pursue their livelihoods through migration, it is not surprising that most patron-client exchanges take place in the context of migrations.

Kinship thus remains vital to status, and not merely as a marker of one's descent; kinship is actively utilised in the building of patron-client relationships which are one of the main ways to achieve *sukses*. In Chapter 5 I discussed the phenomenon of kin-distancing, where siblings with large disparities in wealth or status distance themselves from each other in adulthood. This might seem to run against the notion that kin with different levels of wealth tend to form patron-client relations, but, as pointed out earlier, it is young men who seek assistance in migrations, while kin-distancing operates increasingly strongly as men get older. Also, kin-distancing operates most strongly within the generation while patron-

[207] This is similar to how Lineton described Bugis kinship in the 1970s: 'the chief basis for association, friendship and moral or material aid is kinship, but kin-groups are not clearly structured. They consist basically of a conglomeration of overlapping kindreds, each individual tending to recognise not only his own kindred (to about third cousin range) but also the kindreds of kin and affines with whom he has intimate personal ties' (1975a: 113).

client relations most often operate across generations. That is, a young man may become a client of an older relative, and maintain that relationship over time, but if he accepts assistance from a same-generation relative then he will be likely to phase out this relationship as he gets older.

The most common model of patron-client relations is that of an uncle assisting a nephew in a migration, by employing the nephew in some *rantau*. In this case the uncle provides employment, accommodation and food, and possibly other services such as loans (for such things as wedding costs or family emergencies) and social connections (possibly including support needed to acquire potential marriage partners). In return the nephew provides labour and other services such as housework or other minor tasks, as well as physical protection (if needed) and public support and respect. Still, this is not an equal exchange, either in terms of the type of services exchanged or their value; the client remains in debt to the patron. The more clients one has, the more one's status rises.

I asked La Ode Taate, a Boneoge man who hired many Boneoge youth when he was a successful fish trader in Ambon during the 1980s and 1990s, why he hired almost exclusively Boneoge people. He replied that it was because of trust: 'Ambonese people cost you, their work is not dependable.' There are two separate issues here. One is the fact that Boneoge people see Ambonese workers as lazy and arrogant, only wanting office jobs, whereas Boneoge migrants are perceived as hard working and willing to do any job. Secondly, one needs to be able to trust one's employees, especially if handling money is involved, and Boneoge workers, and kin especially, are seen as more trustworthy than locals. This is probably for good reason: any accusations of mismanagement of funds by Boneoge workers would become known throughout the kin group and village and would damage the status and the employment opportunities of the accused. If the employer has a relationship of seniority to the employee, for example uncle-nephew, and has accepted the employee into his household, then cheating is even more unlikely. Trust is a key reason why ethnicity and kinship are important in hiring practices.[208]

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[208] Lineton (1975a: 188) writes that Bugis people in Ana'banua always prefer kin to non-kin as assistants in farming, because only kin can be fully trusted; Bugis people tend to think of people as divided into two groups, kin and 'other people' (*orang lain*). Kin-based patron-client relations

These considerations arise from sound business practice. The shared culture and social networks probably also makes the working environment more pleasant. It is also desirable to employ Boneoge youth because of the status which comes from having Boneoge clients. La Ode Taate and Haji Kati have earned positions of respect in Boneoge society because of their hiring practices. In contrast, a migrant who became successful in the *rantau* and made no efforts to hire Boneoge youth would be seen as arrogant, as having 'forgotten' Boneoge and his kin there.

This kind of patron-client relation is especially suitable to the lives of traders. Employing kin in the *rantau* is one way in which wealthy traders deal with the 'traders' dilemma' (Evers 1994): the tension between the desire to accumulate capital and the pressure to lend to kin.[209] Clients assist with the running of the trading business. In this way a business can expand, making the owner wealthier, at the same time as he discharges social responsibilities to assist kin.[210]

In Boneoge, nobles have lost status and new economic elites have arisen, but these new economic elites have continued to utilise patron-client relations in order to pursue their economic and social interests. Patron-client relations have thus persisted, but are now anchored more firmly to economic interests. The patrons are not necessarily nobles, but anyone with enough wealth to sponsor employment-oriented migrations. Clients can switch from one patron to another more easily, depending on economic interests. A similar shift in patron-client relations was noted by Pelras for the Bugis: 'in many ways the role of the new élites has remained the same as that of the old aristocracy: to supply would-be clients with patrons' (2000: 36).

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were important amongst migrants in Maluku during the nineteenth century: 'Members of each ethnic group manifested a preference for working with their own kind. Wealthy traders mainly used their compatriots of lower strata to perform manual labour for their trading operations, as did sea captains (*anakoda*) on their trading vessels' (Leirissa 2000: 244).

[209] Another solution to the traders' dilemma, pointed out by Evers (1994: 13), is when trade is conducted at such a small scale that each trader earns barely enough to subsist, and thus does not possess additional capital which could be subject to demands for sharing. Most Boneoge traders are small scale traders, and thus this does seem to be one factor which alleviates the traders' dilemma for them.

[210] Kinship has an important role in patronage structures in other societies in Sulawesi also. Acciaioli found that in Bugis society, kinship constitutes 'a primary, though not an exclusive, channel of recruitment to structures of cooperation and dependence' (Acciaioli 2000: 237). Similarly, Schrauwers noted that among the Pamona people of Central Sulawesi, kinship is solidified by relations of patronage and dependence (2000: 26).

Errington has described a patronage cycle in Bugis society whereby nobles used to use wealth to hold ceremonies, which raised their status and so attracted followers, which in turn led to increases in their wealth (1989: 304). The new economic elite in Boneoge tends to increase their wealth more directly, by focusing on expanding their businesses, but at the same time, by employing relatives they manage to fulfil moral obligations to assist kin, and thus to build patron-client relations, which raises their status. That is, patron-client relations have shifted so that patrons do not sacrifice their wealth for followers, but obtain followers and increase their wealth simultaneously through employing kin in their businesses.

The foregoing should have made it clear that Boneoge has not seen the kind of breakdown in patronage or in kinship ties which is sometimes seen to accompany capitalist development (see Giddens 1982). Rather, both kinship and patronage remain vital to Boneoge social and economic relations. Kinship, through migration networks, is mobilised in the struggle to achieve *sukses*. Those who become patrons (and thus gain followers and status) are not necessarily nobles, village leaders, *adat* leaders or elders, but anyone who has wealth and the inclination, and especially wealthy traders. Patronage follows wealth and *sukses* now, not leadership or nobility.

6.2 Kin-based Migration Networks

Through their migration practices over the past 50 years, Boneoge people have built networks of kin spread out in various places in eastern Indonesia. These migration networks are sets of connected nodes (i.e. migrants) spread out across different migration locations (*rantau*), which act to provide migration opportunities to people within the network.[211] The networks are neither discrete nor static, but overlap with other networks and also change over time (as people move and relationships strengthen or weaken). These kin-based networks are a powerful resource for young Boneoge migrants in their search for *sukses*, and allow Boneoge people as a group to take advantage of opportunities and deal

[211] To be more specific, I speak of a migrant as a 'node' in the network once he/she has established a household and can thus be considered as a possible destination for other migrants who travel amongst the nodes in their network.

with threats which arise in various locations. These networks are not available to all Boneoge people equally, however – rather, an individual's network depends on the strength of his or her various kin relations.[212] People with *sukses*, and traders in particular, have particularly diverse (i.e. widespread) and powerful (i.e. capable of offering resources) migration networks.

I describe the nature of these networks as *village-endogamous*, *attractive*, and *centrifugal*. 'Village-endogamous' refers to the fact that among Boneoge people it is highly desirable to marry a fellow Boneoge person. Village endogamy is very important to the growth of these networks as marriages serve to unify different networks into larger and more powerful groupings. I refer to the networks as 'attractive', since they act to pull people out of the village to various migration locations, through the institution of 'kin summoning' whereby a young relative is called to a site of potential employment. The networks are 'centrifugal' in that they tend to expand, through the migrations of pioneers. Pioneers are highly valued, and if successful, their migrations lead to the enlargement and strengthening of the network.

6.2.1 Form and spread of the networks

The migration networks of Boneoge people are primarily composed of (both consanguineal and affinal) kin, but can also include friends and neighbours – hence the name 'kin-based'. Of course, these networks of relationships do not only provide services related to migration opportunities; these relationships play a host of other roles in people' lives. Since a major focus for Boneoge people is to establish a lucrative livelihood through migrations, the relevance of these networks in assisting migrations is extremely important for local people. Thus I refer to them as 'migration' networks.

In general the most important nodes in one's network, that is the nodes most useful in providing migration opportunities, are uncles and aunts (maternal and paternal uncles/aunts are equally important, and this also includes classificatory uncles and aunts such as the cousins of one's parents). Elder siblings may also act as nodes, particularly if the age difference is significant so that the elder

[212] In what follows I mainly discuss networks from the perspective of the nuclear family, but an *individual's* network depends on his or her personal relationships with particular relatives.

sibling has had time to establish a house in a migration location. Migrations to join younger siblings, although more rare, also occur; sometimes this is when a younger sister has married an already-successful migrant. Half-siblings are another possible source of assisted migrations. There is a high incidence of multiple marriages in the elder generation, due to both polygynous marriage and divorce/abandonment,[213] so many people have half siblings, often through both their mother and through their father.[214]

Friends and neighbours can also act as nodes in migration networks. Friendship is not only important in accessing migration opportunities through non-kin; it is also an important element of migration opportunities through kin. As described above, Boneoge people are close to particular kin depending on other factors such as suitability. The same holds true for neighbours; neighbours are often kin, and it is often those neighbours who are kin (and those kin who are neighbours) who become most important in one's migration network. Thus both friendship and residence proximity can lead to assisted migrations, but more often these factors tend to be used to select between kin; that is kinship remains vital to these networks.

There are a couple of reasons why one's uncles and aunts are the most important nodes in one's migration network. Uncles and aunts generally have a strong desire to assist their nephews and nieces.[215] Second, Boneoge people

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[213] Polygyny still occurs in Boneoge, but it is rare compared to a generation ago, when powerful men often had several wives. Informants spoke of men having more than the four wives allowed under Islam; having many wives seemed to be considered an almost essential aspect of power and prestige in the past. Polygyny seems to have been used by Wolio leaders to bind the *kadié* (villages) to the court at Wolio (by Wolio men taking second wives in the *kadié*), similar to what Errington found in for the Bugis (1989). During the current 'purification' of Islam, polygyny has fallen out of favour in Boneoge (as elsewhere in Indonesia).

[214] One informant told me that half siblings through the same father are 'real siblings', whereas half siblings through the same mother are 'womb siblings' (*saudara kandung*). This alludes to the belief that the father has a more important role in descent, as is indicated in the patrilineal system of noble estates. Relations with half-siblings tend to be rather distant, especially between half siblings who were raised in a different part of the village, in a different village, or in a different time period. On the other hand, half siblings who were raised together can be close, and these tend to be those with the same mother. With this closeness, it is more likely that such half siblings will be included in the migration network.

[215] This sense of responsibility towards nieces and nephews is reflected in the term used to describe them in the Ambonese dialect of Indonesian used by many Boneoge people. Instead of the Indonesian terms '*keponakan*' (niece/nephew), *paman* (uncle) and *tante* (aunt), many people prefer the Ambonese terms '*pangkat anak*' (meaning something like 'classificatory child') for niece/nephew, *pangkat bapak* (classificatory father) for uncle and *pangkat mama* (classificatory mother) for aunt.

generally have many uncles and aunts, especially when 'classificatory' uncles and aunts are included, so there is a good chance some of them may be in a position to offer assistance. Third, the drive for autonomy from one's parents, and the stiffness of social relations between a man and his father, means that it is much more comfortable for young men to receive assistance from uncles and aunts rather than from their own parents.

While the majority of migrants making use of the networks are men, women do also make use of them. While it used to be the case that men went on migrations and women stayed at home, by the 1970s many women were going on migrations with their husbands to Ambon or elsewhere. Women also undertake migrations of their own, seeking employment. It is rare for women to engage in activities such as fishing or labouring, but women do work in factories or, importantly, as traders. Some women have joined uncles or aunts in Ambon and Papua and begun selling clothes at their shops, eventually becoming clothes traders in their own right. Other women have capital from husbands working in Hawaii, and use kin networks and this capital to become clothes traders in Papua, while their husbands continue to work in Hawaii.

Migrations to nodes in one's network may be either 'solicited', where one person summons a young person out to some *rantau*, or 'unsolicited', where the young person decides of their own volition to go and visit a particular relative in a *rantau* to look for work. The assisting relative may provide employment directly (usually in fishing or trading, whichever the relative does), or may attempt to assist the migrant in identifying opportunities in the *rantau*, or it may be up to the migrant to find work for themselves. Once employment is found, the young migrant may contribute to household expenses, but his wages will not be surrendered in their entirety to the aunt (or whoever runs the household). If employment is not found after some time, the migrant will likely move somewhere else.

Siblings often disperse to a number of different locations. Those who establish livelihoods may set up households in the *rantau*, thus becoming a node on the network for their own relatives. This sibling dispersal is related to the fact that migrants avail themselves of particular relatives (nodes) depending both on what the relative has to offer and their degree of closeness with that relative. Many

sets of adult siblings are highly dispersed, with some living in Boneoge, and others having established households in Ambon, Papua, and elsewhere. This means that their children will have plenty of opportunities to migrate to uncles or aunts in different places.

The strength of the networks available to some Boneoge people can be illustrated with a couple of examples. Rather than attempting to map the entire network of a particular individual, I focus on a set of siblings, in order to show dispersal of kin, variety of jobs undertaken, and styles of mobility within the network. I also describe some past migrations, and some migrations in the parents' generation, in order to show how the networks have changed.

Example 1. Family of La Elo. This information comes from an interview with La Elo (male, about 30), who now lives in Boneoge, and earns his living fishing (two of his sisters were also present and contributed to the interview). La Elo's father died within the past year. The father sailed to Singapore, Kaimana (Papua), and other places, and also fished while in Boneoge. The house, built by La Elo's father, is now occupied by La Elo's mother and several of their children, including La Elo. La Elo's father has siblings in Ambon, Wajo Gu (a village near Boneoge), Jayapura, and Kalimantan. La Elo's mother has siblings in Jayapura, Ambon, Kendari and Ternate. La Elo and his siblings thus have a dispersed and powerful network, which has enabled many migrations. There are 10 surviving children (of 13), as follows (from oldest to youngest):

1. Married daughter. She used to live in Ambon, where her husband sold fish in the market. She has also lived in Jayapura, where her husband continued to sell fish. Now she is living in Boneoge.
2. Unmarried son. He has worked in Ambon, but now sells fish in Jayapura.
3. Married daughter. She lives in Boneoge, and her husband is selling fish in Ambon.
4. La Elo (married son). He fishes now in Boneoge, but has worked in Jayapura, Ambon, and East Timor. He spent ten years in Ambon, from 1978-1988, selling fish with various relatives. Then an uncle 'called' him to East Timor; La Elo spent two years working in this uncle's shop and living in his house. From 1994-1998 he worked in Jayapura, and lived at the house of his mother's brother. He worked for one of the big men of Boneoge who has hired many young Boneoge men to work in Papua. Upon his return to Boneoge from Papua, La Elo married. Now he is planning to build a concrete house on the beach, and remain in Boneoge fishing.
5. Married daughter. She is in Ambon, where her husband sells ceramic dishes.
6. Divorced daughter. She is in Boneoge now, not yet remarried. She spent some time in Ambon, at the home of her father's brother. She mentioned that she

plans to leave Boneoge and go to Ambon, Ternate or Kalimantan, choosing one of her uncles to visit.
7. Married son. He is currently in Hawaii. He has worked in Ambon, trading, and also in East Timor, trading as well.
8. Married daughter. She is in Boneoge, married to a teacher who works in Boneoge.
9. Unmarried son. He is in Boneoge now, and has gone on Hawaii migrations.
10. Married daughter. She is in Boneoge, living in her parents' house with her small child. Before she was married she spent time in Ambon, living at her father's brother's house, and also spent some time with her mother's sibling in Kendari. Her husband is currently on a Hawaii migration.

The first child migrated to Ambon two decades ago, as did most people at that time. Several of her uncles were in Ambon before her and could offer assistance. In fact the first four siblings all showed the common pattern of migrating to Ambon and selling fish in the market there. The migrations of the middle siblings show that they have a number of migration options (or active network nodes), including uncles and aunts as well as older siblings, covering Ambon, Papua, East Timor (before 1999), Kalimantan and Ternate. Three of the youngest four siblings are oriented towards Hawaii work,[216] as has been the case with most young Boneoge men since 1999.

All of the siblings (or their husbands) in this family have either engaged in trading or are oriented towards Hawaii work. Thus the family has made the transition from sailing and fishing in the previous generation to trading fish in Ambon, trading in other locations, and then Hawaii migrations. The fact that many of the siblings continue to trade in fish, and that La Elo has returned to fishing, indicates that their level of *sukses* is not extremely high, although it is high enough to have sponsored several Hawaii migrations.

La Elo's more detailed migration history, above, shows a pattern which I call 'roving'; trying several different locations and occupations during one's early years (usually before age 30), before settling into a more stable livelihood (see Section 6.3 below). Some of these migrations were solicited, as when his uncle in East Timor employed him, but others were unsolicited, as when he went to work in Papua. Young women also 'rove', travelling to stay with uncles or aunts

[216] By 'oriented towards Hawaii work', I mean they are either currently working in Hawaii, wanting to work in Hawaii, or are in between contracts and intending to return there. Migrants oriented towards Hawaii are generally not interested in other migrations.

in a *rantau* for several months, without working. Two of La Elo's younger sisters (numbers 6 and 10) engaged in this kind of mobility, visiting uncles in Ambon and Kendari. Young women often meet prospective husbands during such roving. The younger of the two is now married and has stopped roving, but the elder (who is divorced) plans to do so again.[217]

An idea of the power of these networks can be conveyed from the results of a migration survey I conducted on twenty houses located close to my house. Table 6.1 presents the results. An X in the table indicates that the household in question either had a member who had migrated to that location, or had a close relative (parent, child, child-in-law, or sibling) who had. The number of X's in a column thus give some indication of the spread of that household's migration network. The table indicates that a high proportion of these households had migration opportunities in a number of locations in eastern Indonesia, had participated in the sailing era, and had been able to send a household member to Hawaii.[218]

Table 6.1 Diversity of household migration networks

	HOUSEHOLD NUMBER																		
Location	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Ambon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Sailing	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Hawaii	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Papua	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		X	X	X	X
Other	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X

Migration networks expand when migrants eventually earn enough money to establish households in the *rantau*, but they also expand through marriage, as demonstrated in the next example. When a woman marries a successful migrant in the *rantau*, she suddenly becomes a node in her relatives' networks. This example also shows examples of migrations assisted by elder siblings (rather

[217] Women who travel to visit family in other locations (aside from those who travel in order to seek income) also strengthen the networks. School-aged children in Boneoge often go to Ambon to spend the holidays with relatives, which can further bind kin groups together. Such mobility by children also reflects the ease and perceived safety of the journey from Boneoge to Ambon.

[218] It is likely that the networks are even more powerful than indicated in the table, since some migrations may not have been mentioned.

than uncles and aunts), and demonstrates how migrants adapt to political conditions by seeking new migrations when necessary.

Example 2. Family of La Rebo. La Rebo (61) and his wife Wa Apo (51) had 12 children, although six died. Their oldest child, a daughter, lives in Jayapura with her husband, a Boneoge man. The second is a son, La Kule, who works in Kendari for Haji Kati. Three other sons in this family go on migrations to Malaysia, a relatively rare location for Boneoge people. The eldest of these three was the first to migrate to Malaysia; on later trips he took his younger siblings with him. The youngest son returned to Boneoge during the Malaysian crackdown on illegal migrants in early 2002; he spent his time in Boneoge fixing his parents' house, doing construction work on other houses in the village (for wages), and gathering information on possible migrations. The youngest daughter is still in school in Boneoge.

La Rebo, the father, sailed for many years, beginning in 1957 when he was 15. In 1970 he was arrested in Singapore and jailed there for seven months.[219] He did not return to Singapore, and after that spent many years sailing, trading, and fishing, in Maluku and Papua. After his daughter settled in Jayapura, La Rebo went fishing there for a year, building his own boat (*perahu*) there. Now he stays in Boneoge, and trades locally using a *bodi besar* (a wooden boat of about one ton capacity). His wife Wa Apo runs the household and spends much of her time weaving sarongs (which can be sold).

Wa Timu is the wife of La Kule, the eldest son. She migrated to East Timor after she finished primary school, around 1989. Her older sister had earlier married a Boneoge man who worked in East Timor and had a store. Wa Timu's father went to East Timor to join his daughter, and tried fishing there. After some time he returned and took his wife and other children there also. Wa Timu used to work in the store owned by her older sister and her husband. While in East Timor Wa Timu had a Balinese boyfriend for several years but her parents forbade her to marry him. Wa Timu married La Kule in 1994 during a visit to

[219] He was arrested for smuggling, since Boneoge sailing traders to and from Singapore operated illegally. The increased danger of being arrested was one of the factors which ended the Boneoge sailing age around 1970. Presumably smuggling became more difficult after Singapore declared independence in 1965.

Boneoge; La Kule was visiting at the time from Ambon where he worked. After their marriage, Wa Timu joined La Kule in Ambon. La Kule bought fish from ships and sold it at the market – as did Haji Kati – and Haji Kati eventually hired La Kule. La Kule and Wa Timu lived in an uncle's house in Ambon, and stayed there until the riots of 1999. After the riots La Kule moved to Kendari (since Haji Kati moved his business there) while Wa Timu moved back to Boneoge with their children and lived in La Rebo's house, until they built their own house in Boneoge in 2004.

This family shows several examples of how marriage can create new migration opportunities for the family members. Wa Timu's sister married someone working in East Timor, which opened up East Timor to Wa Timu's father and her other siblings. Wa Timu's sister and her husband were able to employ Wa Timu in their shop. With this marriage, Wa Timu's whole family became oriented towards East Timor for migrations. Wa Timu herself then engaged in a classic type of marriage, when two migrants from different *rantau* meet in Boneoge and marry. Through this marriage, Wa Timu went on migration to Ambon, and would have become another network node for her own family's migrations to Ambon had she established a house there. Finally, one of La Rebo's migrations was to join his daughter after she had married someone working in Papua. These cases point to the importance of village endogamy in building migration networks; the networks only expanded because Boneoge men in the *rantau* married Boneoge women living in Boneoge. Note also how Wa Timu was forbidden by her parents to marry her Balinese boyfriend.

Before exploring village endogamy further, one further issue requires clarifying. It is possible to speak of Boneoge diaspora communities, and Butonese diaspora communities, in eastern Indonesia, which provide assistance to new migrants. However, each of these is based on weaker ties than are kin-based migration networks, and thus tend to offer fewer services, with less reliability, and more shame involved in accepting the assistance. Nevertheless it is possible for migrants to obtain assistance from each of these higher levels of community (Boneoge and Buton).

Boneoge diaspora communities in eastern Indonesian *rantau* are partially bonded by kinship, but also by village solidarity, stemming from the positive

value of associating with others of a similar identity, with similar beliefs, acquaintances, histories, and practices. In the *rantau*, as Boneoge people say, any Boneoge person one meets is 'considered a relative' (and many are in fact related, even if they cannot trace the relation). A migrant who lacks kin might still be offered accommodation, food, and help in searching for work. There is some shame in accepting aid from non-kin, however, and the aid offered will likely not be as great as that which kin would offer.[220] Boneoge diaspora communities exist in Ambon[221], and in Jayapura, Manokwari, Serui, Biak, and Nabire (all towns in Papua).[222] Note that migration strategies, and the spread of village diaspora, are highly village-specific, meaning that villages near Boneoge do not have diaspora communities in the same places as does Boneoge.

In a similar way, the Butonese diaspora in various towns in eastern Indonesia form a kind of network, which can provide assistance to newly arrived migrants in the absence of kinship relations or even a common Butonese language. Informants described to me how it is possible for a Butonese person to arrive in a town such as Timika, ask for assistance from the head of the Butonese community, and be provided with a place to sleep and food in the short term while he or she looks for work.[223] Again, this assistance is likely to be less than one might obtain from co-villagers or kin, but would still be valuable for a migrant operating outside of his or her kin networks. This ethnic solidarity and

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[220] By living amongst or staying in touch with the diaspora community, newcomers obtain access to social and ceremonial events, companionship in religious observances, protection in times of conflict, and access to both potential marriage partners and work opportunities. The close connections between the home village and the diaspora community make it easy to receive news from Boneoge or to send money home to one's wife or mother. The diaspora community thus facilitates the provision of many of the migrant's social and economic needs.

[221] The main Boneoge diaspora in Ambon city is at the suburbs of Waihaong and Dok. Before the 1999 riots, there was also a Boneoge diaspora community at Halong, about 10 kilometres outside of Ambon city, consisting mostly of farmers and labourers.

[222] The solidarity of these various diaspora communities can be seen when they return to Boneoge, for instance at Lebaran. The Serui group and the Nabire group compete with each other to sponsor well-attended fish barbeques, and play each other in football matches. Kin relations also strengthen the bonds within these groups, but their experiences in the *rantau* bind them together even in the absence of kin relations.

[223] Butonese migrants exhibit a strong propensity to live near each other in the *rantau*; the prevalence of such concentrations, often called '*kampung* Buton', in eastern Indonesian towns is evidence of this. Prominent sites of Butonese diaspora in eastern Indonesia include Silale and Waihaong (in Ambon), Dok IX Bawah (in Jayapura), and, before 1999, Hera (just outside of Dili, in East Timor). Butonese diaspora often have an acknowledged leader; for example in East Timor before 1999 this was said to be La Ode Ali Kudus. Newly arrived migrants were expected to register their arrival with him, he was instrumental in arranging weddings, and he could negotiate collectively on behalf of the Butonese migrants in East Timor, in cases of conflict.

willingness to assist acts as an important resource which has helped to enable the proliferation of Butonese migrants in eastern Indonesia. However, the overwhelming majority of Boneoge migrants rely on kin-based migration networks rather than on Butonese diaspora communities.

6.2.2 Village endogamy

Example 2 above showed how migration networks can expand through marriages to other Boneoge people. Most Boneoge people desire to marry Boneoge people, and village endogamy is a crucial factor in explaining the strength of Boneoge migration networks. This section discusses village endogamy and its effects on migration networks in more depth.[224]

Marriages with fellow Boneoge people are generally considered 'good' marriages. Although marriages with outsiders do occur, especially among migrants, from my informal sample it appears that perhaps 80% of marriages are village endogamous.[225] Marrying one's own first (and sometimes second) cousin is now discouraged, but marrying more distant kin is quite acceptable and even encouraged.[226] The most desired marriages seem to be between households which are located very close to each other, often just a few doors away from each other. Marriages between Kampung Baru and Boneoge proper are rare.

Village endogamy amongst those Boneoge farmers living in the hills before the 1970s is easy to understand, since their mobility was not very high (and if they did migrate to Ambon, they tended to live in a community of Boneoge farmers). During the sailing years, also, men spent most of their time at sea rather than in port, meaning that they would have had only limited social interaction with other women, and village endogamy is thus not surprising. Since the 1970s, though, large numbers of Boneoge migrants have been living in cities, surrounded by non-Boneoge people, yet the incidence of village endogamy has remained high. Even amongst Boneoge migrants living long term in Ambon

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[224] Ellen (2003: 251) has noted the endogamous nature of the Butonese migrants in Maluku.

[225] I noted earlier that those born to Boneoge parents, even if raised in the *rantau*, are still considered Boneoge people.

[226] Schoorl found, based on research in the 1980s, that marriages with first cousins were allowed at the Wolio Sultanate's centre but prohibited in other regions, suggesting that first cousin marriages were important for nobles (2003: 241).

before the riots, very few married Ambonese[227] or Javanese people; some married Bugis partners, but most married Boneoge people, or people from villages neighbouring Boneoge. Young migrants sometimes have boyfriends or girlfriends from other regions, but Boneoge parents tend to discourage marriages with those partners.

Village endogamy allows descendants of Boneoge migrants to still consider themselves Boneoge people after several generations in Ambon. If their ancestors had married Ambonese people, the descendants would not necessarily have a clear Butonese identity. If their ancestors married Butonese people from other villages, the descendants might retain a Butonese identity, but it would be difficult to call themselves Boneoge people. If the parents are both from Boneoge, then a child's claim to be a Boneoge person tends to be accepted unreservedly, even if he or she has never visited the village.

When I asked Boneoge men why they prefer Boneoge women, two linked beliefs were mentioned, both related to migration. One is that Boneoge women are believed to remain loyal even if the husband leaves them for two years to go on a migration, while other women are seen as less loyal. The other is that Boneoge women will 'understand' if there are periods when the husband has no income, but other women are said to demand that their husband earns money constantly and regularly. These two factors are linked since it is thought that women who have an uncertain flow of money from their husbands are more likely to become involved with other men. One young Boneoge man explained to me:

> If you marry a woman from another village, the worry is that her parents would not understand. If I am not working, and our finances are low, they might not accept that. It's tough in other villages...that problem can arise. Boneoge women are more accepting. Boneoge women are loyal and patient. A woman from Bungi, if she is left for three months, says 'bye' [meaning she

[227] Religion is an important factor in mate choice, but this would not rule out Ambonese Muslims. Even so, informants could name only three marriages between Boneoge people and Ambonese among over a thousand people returning from Ambon. There may have been more marriages with Ambonese Muslims amongst Boneoge people in Ambon who did not return to Buton following the riots, but it is likely that I would have heard mention of them if they were frequent. Negative perceptions of Butonese migrants in Ambon may contribute to the rarity of such marriages. Butonese are known for working dirty jobs such as labouring and selling fish, which contributes to their low status in Ambon. This renders Butonese people unattractive marriage partners for the Ambonese. Interestingly, in all three reported cases of intermarriage with Ambonese, it was the man who was Ambonese, not the woman.

> takes another man]. Boneoge women can be left for two years. Even in other parts of Buton, I wouldn't be sure. Sometimes three months is okay. With Javanese women, if you have money they love you, if you don't they kick you out. In other villages, after three months of receiving no remittances, the woman will start working; in Boneoge no...the woman would just wait. She can seek protection [i.e. food] from her relatives.

For men, then, village endogamy is partly motivated by perceptions about Boneoge women which fit well with Boneoge men's styles of mobility (long separations between husband and wife) and earning (risks undertaken, some periods of low or no income).[228] Men wish their wives to live in Boneoge while they are away, and a Boneoge woman is more likely to be willing to do this. When the man returns from his migration, he can see both his wife and his parents with ease if they are in the same place; men mention this as another reason to marry Boneoge women. During his absence, his wife in Boneoge is also watched over by his kin, which is an extra control on her fidelity.[229] The quote above also praises the patience of Boneoge women in not working when a husband's earnings are low. This is about status; when a man's wife works, the family is considered to be poor, and thus their status drops. Men thus often prefer that their wives do not work, even if money is tight. Boneoge women are said to be willing to scrape by with little income, instead of bringing shame upon her husband by working.

From the perspective of Boneoge women, marrying a Boneoge man is also desirable, but for different reasons. If she married a man from elsewhere, she may be asked to live in his village, far from her own kin; marrying a Boneoge man means that she will be able to live near her own kin. This also means that

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[228] Note that my goal is not to provide a complete explanation of why people marry endogamously, but rather to examine the ways in which village endogamy occurs, and its effects on migration networks. Marrying a fellow Boneoge person is likely desirable for a host of other, unarticulated, reasons, of course, including common cultural practices and understandings, and overlapping social networks.

[229] When a man is away on a migration, certain rules govern his wife's behaviour in order to ensure the appearance of fidelity. For instance, she should not receive a male guest into her house while her husband is away and she should not leave the village without the permission of her husbands' relatives. During the sailing age, it was believed that the safety of the husband at sea depended on his wife's fidelity in Boneoge; if she had an affair, some tragedy was likely to befall him. If he had a dangerous experience at sea, for instance if his ship sunk, he was likely to return and confront his wife. The fidelity of both Boneoge men and women is held up as exemplary, as by one (female) informant: 'in Boneoge people are faithful, it is safe, but in nearby villages the husband won't be gone a month and the wife will have an affair. If the husband is unfaithful, the wife will feel it in Boneoge, or their child will cry all day.'

she will be able to take care of her parents, which is desirable for many women. Even if she accompanies her husband on a migration, she will likely be near relatives and friends in a Boneoge *rantau*. There are also beliefs about other ethnic groups which inhibit exogamous marriage. For instance, women say that marrying a Bugis man is risky, because they tend to abandon their wives and children at some point and return to their home village in South Sulawesi. If a woman marries a Boneoge man, sanctions against abandonment can be applied by mutual kin (both through direct confrontation as well as indirectly through social pressure).

Parents have an important influence over a child's choice of marriage partner, and seem universally to encourage village endogamy. Young people choose their own partners, but both sets of parents have to give their agreement before a marriage can take place.[230] Wa Timu, from Example 2 above, had to give up her Balinese boyfriend since her parents would not permit her to marry him. An informant explained why parents desire a Boneoge child-in-law: 'Parents tell their children to marry Boneoge people, so that they are still tied to Boneoge, still close. They fear that if they marry in a faraway village, they won't come back to Boneoge.' Thus parents seek to tie their children to the Boneoge community through marriage, so that migration and exogamous marriage do not sever their connection to the home village.[231]

Marrying a Boneoge woman might also particularly suit the migrant trader lifestyle. Among Bugis migrants, marrying a local in the *rantau* can be a strategy for success; through marriage, a man can obtain protection, land rights, and access to employment opportunities (Lineton 1975a: 199).[232] Traders, however, sometimes find that marrying a local in the *rantau* brings social obligations which threaten the business. In Chapter 3 I quoted La Ode Hami telling about his experience marrying a local woman in Papua during his migration there, where

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[230] Some informants reported that arranged marriages were much more common before the 1960s.

[231] Lineton also found that in South Sulawesi, marriages with kin, such as second cousins, served to bind the kin group together, prevent fragmentation of landholdings and maintain the purity of blood (for nobles) (Lineton 1975a: 111-3). In Boneoge, however, agricultural land is no longer in demand, and noble class is no longer an important consideration for marriage partners.

[232] Kato also found that Minangkabau migrants (from Sumatra) do tend to leave kin networks behind and marry outsiders (1977: 298).

his wife's relatives would take his goods without paying. He gave up and left Papua, telling me 'you couldn't get rich like that'.

Similarly, in Chapter 5 I described how being near your own kin in Boneoge can make trading difficult, and gave the example of La Uru whose kiosk went bankrupt because relatives and neighbours did not pay for their purchases. Marrying a Boneoge woman but going on migrations to trade in the *rantau* may serve to protect the migrants from some of the burden of obligations to share wealth with kin. In the *rantau*, fewer kin are near, and those that are near are often themselves working and thus making fewer demands.

The examples in the previous section hinted at how endogamous marriages can expand migration networks; in fact endogamous marriages take place in a variety of different patterns of mobility, each with different effects on migration networks. The most prominent situations (all involving marriages between two Boneoge people) are as follows.

- *Pre-migration marriage*. A couple gets married before either has gone on a migration. This is rare, though, since men tend to go on their first migration before they marry. When this situation occurs, however, it greatly increases a migrant's choices in deciding on his first migration, since he can use his wife's network as well as his own.
- *Homecoming marriage*. Another common pattern is when a young man who was raised in Boneoge returns to the village after a migration and marries a woman who was also raised in Boneoge. If the man's migration is already lucrative, he will likely continue it, and possibly become a node from which his new wife's kin can benefit. Similarly, when a woman marries a Hawaii boy, he might then help her brother to get a job on the ships. On the other hand if the man's migration is not yet lucrative, he might take advantage of his newly enlarged migration network and try a migration to the *rantau* of one of his wife's kin. Strong migration networks possessed by either the male or the female tend to raise their desirability as a marriage partner.

- *Rantau marriage.* A couple who both live in the same *rantau* get married.[233] In this kind of marriage, neither of the partners has to move to a different *rantau* after marriage. In most cases the man will already be working, in which case he might continue his job or he might use his wife's network to get something better. An example of the latter is when the daughter of one of my neighbours married while in Biak, Papua. She was already a clothes trader, so her new husband gave up his job and joined her in the trading business. It was practical for her to marry someone in Biak so that she would not be asked to move away from her trading business. Their new household will become a node in the networks on both sides.
- *Convergence at the source.* Two people returning from migrations to different *rantau* meet in Boneoge and marry. Many migrants return home during the fasting month of Ramadan, which means that people from all different *rantau* meet in Boneoge at this time. Here the village of Boneoge acts as a link between two different *rantau.* One case in Example 2 above fitted this pattern: Wa Timu returned to Boneoge from East Timor and married La Kule who was visiting from Ambon. Wa Timu then moved to Ambon with La Kule. Both networks were expanded; relatives of Wa Timu were able to visit them in Ambon, and La Kule would have been able to migrate to East Timor with Wa Timu's family if his job in Ambon was not working out well.
- *Rantau to rantau.* A Boneoge migrant from one *rantau* visits relatives in another *rantau,* and meets and marries a Boneoge woman there. This also acts to join these two *rantau,* but without Boneoge as the intermediary. An example of this is a neighbour of mine, who worked in East Timor for ten years. Once he visited relatives in Ambon, met a Boneoge woman there, married her, and took her back to East Timor. Although the couple met after travelling great distances, their parent's houses in Boneoge were only 40 meters apart.

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[233] Note that although such marriages sometimes take place in the *rantau,* many couples hold the wedding in Boneoge, which serves to announce it to the Boneoge community more effectively.

- *Return to the source.* A male migrant who was born and raised in the *rantau* (most commonly Ambon) comes back to Boneoge specifically to find a wife. Until the 1980s there was a lack of unmarried Boneoge women in Ambon and this model was common. Even though there are now plenty of Boneoge girls in Ambon, this type of marriage still occurs, albeit less frequently. The man often takes his wife out to the *rantau* after the wedding. There are often strong cultural differences between Ambon-raised Boneoge people and those raised in the home village, which provide challenges for this type of marriage.[234] In spite of these difficulties, this kind of marriage still occurs, and serves to strengthen a migrant's connection to the home village, and to Boneoge social networks, from which he may be somewhat distanced after a lifetime in the *rantau*. It also opens up a new migration for the women's kin.

It might appear that even by marrying a non-Boneoge person, a Boneoge person could broaden his or her migration network. But people from other regions may not have the same ideas about long separations from husbands, assisting the new husband in his migrations, and so on. Also, a non-Boneoge spouse might not be willing to sponsor young relatives from Boneoge – Boneoge men did not describe being offered jobs in the *rantau* by non-Boneoge affinal kin. Even if they were offered such opportunities, Boneoge people would probably find them less desirable than migrating within Boneoge-based networks, where one is surrounded by kin and friends in the *rantau*.

To summarise, village endogamy fits well with Boneoge migration patterns, and is supported by beliefs about the nature of women and men. Village endogamy serves to enlarge and strengthen migration networks, to tie migrants back to the home village, to attract others out to the *rantau*, and to bind different *rantau* together. By improving migration opportunities for Boneoge migrants,

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[234] A woman whose marriage was of this form told me that she and her husband had communication difficulties; her husband spoke Ambonese but did not speak *bahasa* Muna well, and she spoke only *bahasa* Muna and did not know Indonesian. She said about her husband: 'Ambon is his home, since he was young...he was born there. They're not the same as those of us who were born and raised in Boneoge.'

village endogamy is a major part of how migration networks enable people to achieve *sukses*.

6.2.3 Kin summoning

Boneoge people may take advantage of their migration networks by deciding by themselves to go on a migration assisted by kin in a *rantau*. In many cases, however, kin in the *rantau* actually summon young people from Boneoge to come and work with them. This practice, which I call 'kin summoning', is very common in the Boneoge community. The effect is that young people are actively pulled out from the home village to the *rantau*, and it is for this reason that I describe the migration networks as 'attractive'.

As I interviewed migrants, it was extremely common for them to say 'I went to Ambon because my uncle summoned/called (*panggil*) me there'. This 'summoning' is not a demand which must be obeyed, but an offer which may be either accepted or declined with minimal offence. Many migrations, especially to East Timor, Ambon, and Papua, occurred because an older relative summoned a younger relative from Boneoge to come and join them. This practice remains frequent, with migrants based in Ambon and Papua often being in a position to hire other people, and usually choosing to summon kin from Boneoge when they can. The most frequent summoners are uncles and aunts, just as they are the most common network nodes. Migrants also summon their younger siblings, but this is rarer than summoning nephews, since by the time an older sibling achieves enough *sukses* to be able to summon the younger, the younger have often found themselves other migrations.

When a young person is summoned to a *rantau*, this means that the summoner is willing to provide them with accommodation, food, and a job in the *rantau* (and possibly even to cover their travel expenses to make the journey). For instance, an uncle might summon his nephew from the village to come and join him fishing or trading clothes in Papua. The summoned migrant will usually receive wages for this work, and may contribute something for household expenses. The summoned migrant, in turn, will generally assist in household duties at the house of his patron, and become a loyal part of the patron's household. In other words the summoner acquires a new 'client'; the summoned

migrant may be referred to an '*anak buah*' (assistant, underling) of the boss. The hierarchy in such a relationship is clear, thus summoning (and the patron-client relation in general) works best between an older and a younger relative.[235]

Kin summoning is beneficial for the summoned for a number of reasons. The summoned migrant departs on a migration with an assured job, and a place to live amongst family where his expenses are covered. This is far preferable to having to find his own job, or going to a *rantau* where he does not know anybody. To the extent that a migrant is often summoned, this also means that his family has enough *sukses* to provide him with employment and is thus a measure of their (and, indirectly, his) status. If the migration does not prove lucrative after all, the summoned migrant may return to Boneoge, terminating the arrangement. The summoned migrant might also decide to leave if he gets bored, if he does not get along with the summoner, or if he hears of a potentially more lucrative migration elsewhere which he wants to try.

Kin summoning is also beneficial for the summoner. Summoning kin builds patronage networks and raises one's status and perceived *sukses*. Summoning relatives from Boneoge also strengthens a migrant's relations to their kin in the home village, which is important especially if they have spent many years in the *rantau* without many visits home. The summoner can end the arrangement, for instance if the summoned migrant is not good at the job, or proves to be difficult to handle – I heard of cases where a migrant was sent home because he was drinking too much and hanging out with the wrong crowd.

It is possible to summon kin even if one cannot directly employ them. Migrants who have established a home in the *rantau* sometimes summon young relatives out to their homes without offering them a job; in that case the young relatives will have to seek their own job if they do come. This is still seen as useful to the summoned, since there are more work opportunities in the *rantau*

[235] This is one reason why people rarely summon older siblings, since there would be tensions between the superior status of the elder sibling, by age seniority, and the superior status of the summoner, as the one providing the job.

than in the home village, and to the summoner, since this arrangement still constitutes a patron-client relationship.[236]

Boneoge migrants also use the term 'summoning' (*panggil*, BM: *lo'oi*) to refer to cases where a migrant, upon returning from a successful migration, invites another Boneoge person to accompany him in returning to the same place, in the hopes that he will be able to undertake the same job there. This form of 'summoning' is more an invitation to accompany rather than a guarantee of accommodation and employment. Migrations to Malaysia and to Hawaii often occur in this manner, as in the case of La Rebo's sons in Example 2 above. Going on a new migration without any guidance is difficult and risky; being taken by a friend who knows where to go and how to get a job is much easier and more likely to result in a successful migration. Boneoge men going on migrations to Malaysia often invite a friend to come along, show them how to enter the country, and attempt to get them a job at the same construction site. This means that the invited man can avoid having to use a Jakarta-based migration agent to set up the work, which costs a lot and carries the risk of deception by the agent. For Hawaii jobs, even though the contracts are obtained in Jakarta and men often do not end up on the same ship, assistance is still very important in obtaining contracts. When I asked why people from neighbouring villages had not been migrating en masse to Hawaii like Boneoge people, my informant responded that someone needs to introduce you to the agent the first time or you will not get a contract. Thus the institution of 'summoning' is important in both Hawaii and Malaysia migrations.

Kin summoning is thus a key characteristic of Boneoge migration networks which increases mobility within the networks, enables migrants to increase their own status by offering assistance to kin (i.e. building patron-client relationships) while not reducing their opportunities to accumulate money, and binds kin closer together. It also serves to spread *sukses* through families and across generations.

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[236] Established migrants also invite young relatives (nieces, nephews, younger siblings) who are still in school, paying their school expenses and living expenses for the child while he/she joins their household. This model is common in Ambon where schools are seen as better quality than in Boneoge.

6.2.4 Pioneers

Boneoge kin-based migration networks have a centrifugal tendency; there is an outward pressure, a tendency for the network to expand by the addition of new nodes in new places. One mechanism by which networks expand is pioneer migrations. A pioneer migration can be defined as a migration without assistance from one's kin-based network, involving a new *rantau* or a new occupation, which subsequently becomes desirable to other kin. If a migrant goes somewhere alone but does not have much *sukses*, this migration does not add to the migration network; a pioneer is someone who establishes a new migration for others to follow. Individuals in Boneoge who are recognised as being pioneer migrants are highly regarded, since they have 'served' their community by opening up new migration possibilities, often after successfully completing a risky and uncertain endeavour.

In fact a migration network can expand or contract. Contraction can occur if a relative dies in the *rantau*, or moves back to Boneoge, or moves to join other relatives in a different *rantau*. The latter case often occurs if one person becomes a successful node and invites kin living elsewhere to join him or her. This can be referred to as 'convergence' to a strong node in the network, and results in the network shrinking in size. A network can also shrink when a marriage breaks down; a migrant is unlikely to migrate to the location of an affinal kinsman where the marriage is having difficulties or has ended. Growth of networks occurs in two main ways. One is through marriage, which unites two different kin groups and thus their migration networks (as described in Section 6.2.2), and the other is through pioneer migrations.

The story of the first group of four Hawaii migrants is a good example of a pioneer migration. The opportunity to go to Hawaii arose because of a Boneoge man's close relationship with someone high up in a Japanese fishing company who trusted him enough to recommend workers for their ships. For those who embarked, courage was required as they faced uncertainty and a year of life on a ship in faraway places, further than Boneoge people had ever ventured. Hard work was also required, with the men getting few breaks during their 14 month contract. But at the end of it, they returned home with fabulous wealth, and as a

result of this initial effort, hundreds of other Boneoge men have gone on to enjoy the success of Hawaii migrations. In this case both the men who enabled the migration to happen as well as the men who embarked are revered as pioneers.

Stories about Boneoge pioneers often emphasise the cleverness or courage of the pioneer in finding a new economic niche or location to exploit. The story of Haji Adnan's pioneering migration to East Timor was told to me by his father-in-law:

> East Timor was annexed by Indonesia in 1975. A couple of years later, civilians still were not allowed to go there. But Haji Adnan had gotten to know some soldiers in Papua, and he accompanied them to East Timor, and worked as their porter. After that he opened a small kiosk, and then built it up until he had a big store. He married my daughter [in Boneoge], and she went with him to East Timor. Eventually I went there as well. Haji Adnan summoned many relatives...

Haji Adnan managed to get into East Timor before other migrants did, because of his relationship with the soldiers, and his early entry into the region meant that there was not yet much economic competition. Thus he managed to build a successful trading business. It is easy to tell from the story that he has achieved *sukses*; he is a *haji*, he has a trading business, and he has 'summoned many relatives'.

Boneoge people as a group think of themselves as pioneers; this is shown through frequent claims that Boneoge people were the first to do this or that. These are claims to high status for the villagers and for the village itself with respect to the surrounding region. For instance, informants frequently emphasised that 'Boneoge was the first to go to Singapore' and 'Boneoge was the first to go to Hawaii'. The former example is instructive since in fact, Boneoge people learned how to sail by working as crew on ships from Wanci (in the Tukang Besi Islands), where there is a long history of sailing to Singapore. Upon further questioning, informants often clarified their claim, saying 'Boneoge was the first *around here* to sail to Singapore', with 'around here' meaning the southern end of Buton Island, or perhaps just the few villages around Boneoge.

This shows that the concept of pioneer is localised. A pioneer is someone who brings a migration into the realm of possibility for Boneoge people, but it is quite possible that the pioneer was guided by some experienced non-Boneoge migrant. A migration is 'pioneering' not because nobody has done it before, but because

Boneoge people are not currently able to do it. Similarly, Boneoge as a village is considered to be a pioneer because it brought new migrations (such as Singapore) into the reach of the villages near Boneoge. This is clear in the way Boneoge people speak about pioneering *bagan* fishing in Papua. Butonese learned the use of the *bagan* from the Bugis, who used them off the coast of Papua in the post-war period (as well as in South Sulawesi). The early Boneoge *bagan* workers, though, were pioneers for Boneoge people, since they brought *bagan* fishing into the Boneoge migration repertoire. The original (non-Boneoge) sponsors are often forgotten in stories about these pioneers, as by this informant: 'that's what we do, we try to find new places. We were the first to go to Papua [for *bagan* fishing], and there were lots of fish. After that, lots of people followed us there and set up *bagan*.' This statement is a claim to pioneer status, and thus to high status with respect to neighbouring villages (or whoever it was that followed them).

Pioneering is revered in any economic endeavour, even when it does not involve migration, and informants always made sure to make it known when they considered themselves, or Boneoge or Butonese people as a group, to be pioneers. My interview notes are scattered with statements like: 'it was Butonese people who first took Irianese people hunting *cenderawasih* birds in Papua'; 'I was the first to use a nylon net, I brought it from Singapore...and got lots of fish'; 'I was the first to use a fishing boat with an engine here'; 'my father was the first here to use a crab net'.

Essentially these are claims to precedence, a concept which is very important for status systems in eastern Indonesia (Fox 1994, 2009; Acciaioli 2009). The claim to precedence in economic endeavours occurs even within Boneoge, and even for small activities. One woman told me, 'When I first arrived back in Boneoge [in 1999, from Ambon], I made cakes [to sell for income]. Eventually many others were making cakes. So I switched to sticky rice. And again others followed. Then I bought sprats in Lombe, and sold them here.' It is clear that she was describing herself as a pioneer, in trying new economic endeavours which other people then follow. She was thus claiming a measure of status as a pioneer who showed the way for others, and as the one who had first claim (i.e. precedence) on the economic territory or niche.

Precedence is also important outside of the realm of economic endeavour. Precedence is marked in traditional ceremonies, which commemorate the first house post erected (for wooden buildings), the first stone laid (for stone buildings), the first time a newborn baby touches the earth, eight months pregnancy with the first child, and the first corn harvested for the year. In Boneoge agricultural practices, it is the *bhisano kaampo* (BM: shaman of gardens) who determines the proper time to begin planting. This high status man plants his own land at the time he decides is auspicious, and the other farmers plant immediately after him. Thus high status people must go first; this principle is echoed in many activities and habits, such as the principle that the highest status guest begins the meal by ladling rice into his plate before others. The converse is that those who go first are of high status, and this seems to hold true in Boneoge; pioneers are valorised in all sorts of endeavours.

Precedence in location is also valued. In Boneoge housing clusters, those who built first enjoy some level of status from precedence. People commonly pointed out to me who was the first to build in their housing cluster, saying 'by April [1999], he had built his house here [in Matoka]...he was the first', or 'when I built my house there were no other houses here'. These are claims of precedence and the status which ensues from this. Similarly, Kampung Baru has lower status than Boneoge proper because (among other reasons) the Kampung Baru houses were built later. This is the case in the *rantau* as well; those who arrived first have higher status. An informant told me about a potential conflict situation in East Timor which had been defused through a meeting with the head of the Butonese migrants. The informant said 'the head of the Butonese was feared...he was the first to come here'.

This valorisation of pioneering, in stories and in the high status of pioneers, is a vital part of Boneoge migration as it rewards and encourages attempted pioneer migrations. From the perspective of the individual, an attempted pioneer migration offers the possibility of wealth and high status (if it succeeds) but also uncertainty, danger, and possible financial loss. Solicited migrations (where the migrant is summoned) are safer, more comfortable, and more likely to bring profit. Unsolicited migrations within the network are more risky than solicited

migrations but still more reliable than pioneering. Generally migrants prefer to undertake the safer options if they have such a choice.

From the perspective of the group, or the network, it is desirable that there be a strategic balance between pioneer and non-pioneer migrations. That is, it is advantageous if various migrants undertake different types of migration (risky pioneer exploration, foraging out into the network, and answering a summons), so that their migrations result in a continual expansion of new opportunities as well as many migrants who achieve enough *sukses* to become nodes. This has indeed occurred in Boneoge networks. Enough of the attempted pioneer migrations have worked out successfully so that Boneoge migration networks now can provide many opportunities to Boneoge men in their search for *sukses*.

6.3 Using Kinship Networks to Achieve *Sukses*

Migration networks have proved extremely useful in enabling Boneoge people to achieve *sukses*. Those people who have strong networks and manage to use them to achieve *sukses* (in particular by trading) have climbed up in the Boneoge status system – as the status system has itself been shifting in such a way as to prioritise the big man model of high status. I have described migration networks as sets of nodes; migrants utilise particular strategies in travelling amongst these nodes in order to attempt to achieve *sukses*. Here I will describe three types of mobility which give an indication of how people use migration networks. The first is 'roving', an exploratory type of mobility by which young migrants test out several different migrations before settling into a stable livelihood. The second is 'convergence', where the existence of a particularly successful migrant, or node, can lead a number of family members to move to that node in order to join that migrant and undertake the same occupation. Finally, I discuss the types of mobility which can result when migrants have to deal with disruption. Migration networks can provide alternative locations for people whose livelihoods are disrupted due to market-related changes or political instability, which can suddenly render an area or an economic niche unsuitable for migration. An extreme case of this occurred in 1999 in Ambon, when

thousands of Boneoge migrants left the city in a hurry due to the breakout of the riots there.

Teenagers setting out on their first migrations often adopt a roving 'style' for some years until they find a migration which they choose to settle into as a more stable livelihood. Roving involves using the network to undertake a number of different migrations, involving different occupations in different locations, usually spending less than a year on each one and coming back to Boneoge in between. Migrants explain this roving strategy as partly due to restlessness and the desire to 'gain experience', and partly due to the wish to find a job they consider lucrative and enjoyable enough.

Migration histories of young people show many examples of roving. La Borongo (age 27) began going on migrations as a teenager. He went on several migrations to Ambon, selling fish at the market with his mother's sister. He has gone on a migration to join his mother's brother in Jayapura, working on a *bagan* there. After his father went to Malaysia, La Borongo also went on a migration there to do construction work. After that, he tried going to Hawaii and liked it, and continued working in Hawaii for the next five years.

La Ode Niha (age 30) was in high school when he was caught with a girl. He was to be forced to marry her, so he quickly went on a migration to Ambon instead. He spent four years there, living with an aunt in Waihaong, and selling fish in the market with his uncle. After that he went to Malaysia to do construction work for 18 months, after being invited by his sister-in-law's brother (who had been there before). While in Malaysia, he heard about the Hawaii migrations from other Boneoge men, and became interested. So he came back to Boneoge, gathered information about how to get a job in Hawaii, and managed to go on a Hawaii migration around 1995. He spent the next seven years going on migrations to Hawaii. Clearly both La Ode Niha and La Borongo above found the Hawaii migration most satisfying.

This roving style is characteristic of young rather than old migrants. The reasons for this are related to the risks involved in trying new migrations and the aspirations of the migrants during different periods of their lives. Trying a new migration can be risky, since it may work out that one does not earn enough to save money, or the job might be dangerous or unpleasant. Young men tend to be

willing to take these risks, in the hopes of achieving *sukses*. If their earnings are not what they consider to be sufficient, then they quit and try a different migration, often returning to Boneoge first in order to collect information on other possible migrations. As one migrant said,

> I worked in Ambon for a year, on the *arumbai* [type of fishing boat] of Haji Ara. I lived with relatives in Dok. But I was not very satisfied there, the money was not much. In the end I came back to Boneoge for a couple of months. Next I went to Irian Jaya; an uncle called me to work on his bagan.

Older men are less likely to 'rove', for two reasons. One is that as one gets older it is increasingly shameful to accept assistance in migrations from kin (as explained in Chapter 5). Also, though, a married man with children is responsible for providing a regular flow of earnings to support the household; this means that he may prefer a stable albeit low income to a risky gamble on a new migration. This is part of the reason why middle aged men eventually 'accept their lot' or their 'fate', and become less bold in trying new migrations.[237] How people make use of these networks changes over the life cycle, and migration networks are particularly useful to young men just setting out.

A second form of mobility within migration networks is what I call 'convergence', which is when a number of migrants move to one particular node in the network. An example of this comes from the family of Wa Ondo, the fourth child of a Boneoge sailor and boat builder. Wa Ondo went on migrations with her husband to Papua. The husband was a fisher, using *bagan* and fishing boats, but eventually he and his wife managed to become fish traders, and then moved to Biak and began trading clothes in 1995.[238] Over the next years their trading business grew, and they achieved *sukses* and went on the pilgrimage. Three out of four of Wa Ondo's younger siblings have joined her in Biak, to trade clothes also. Some of these siblings brought their own capital, and learned the clothes trading business from Wa Ondo. Others showed up with nothing and

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[237] Before the 1980s, families often engaged in agriculture, which could provide subsistence if migrations failed to produce earnings. But now, without agriculture to provide food in case a migration fails, a married man must be more certain of income from his migrations. Relatives would certainly contribute food for a family which had no income, preventing them from starving, but the man's level of shame at such assistance would be high.

[238] This is a common shift in livelihoods for Boneoge people over the past three decades: from fishing to trading fish to trading clothes.

worked as assistants for some years until marriage, at which point Wa Ondo would give them enough capital to start their own trading venture. Clearly all of these younger siblings identified Wa Ondo as the most promising node in their networks, and converged there.[239]

The tendency for migrants to converge in this way shows that restless wandering is not an overriding drive for young migrants; rather, they are attempting to establish livelihoods to their liking, and if they should find them quickly then they will settle into them with little roving. Pioneers expand migration networks, roving migrants test out different options, and through convergence migrants attempt to zone in on the most lucrative migrations and take advantage of them.

A third way in which people make use of networks to achieve *sukses* is related to dealing with disruption in the *rantau*. The period since World War II has been volatile in eastern Indonesia, with violent rebellions in Sulawesi and Ambon, the annexations of East Timor and Papua, improving transportation facilities and shifting economic opportunities. Boneoge migrants have been adept at using networks to take advantage of emerging opportunities, as can be seen in the shift from sailing to settling in Ambon in the 1970s, and new migrations to Papua from the 1960s and to East Timor from the late 1970s. On the other hand, when political conditions take a sudden change for the worse, disrupting migrants' ability to live and earn safely, migration networks are also crucial in enabling them to establish new livelihoods quickly. When the East Timor referendum led to independence in 1999, Boneoge migrants in East Timor evacuated and found new livelihoods elsewhere. The Ambon riots which began in January 1999 caused the largest case of disruption in the living memory of Boneoge migrants, but again, their networks enabled them to quickly re-establish livelihoods.

After the Ambon riots began, approximately two thousand refugees fled to Boneoge, many of them having lost their houses and much of their possessions, but they did not languish in refugee camps.[240] Although some suffered great

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[239] Wa Ondo's older siblings did not converge upon her, probably because they already had livelihoods, and there would be shame in asking assistance from a younger sibling.

[240] Some families remained in Ambon, not coming to Buton at all – especially those who had been in Ambon for generations, had only a very weak connection with Boneoge, or were able to continue their income generating activities in Ambon during the riots. Those families living

economic losses, and some continue to have difficulties, many families managed to quickly re-establish stable incomes while also ensuring the safety of family members. The most common ways in which (nuclear) families managed to do so are the following.

- The family shifted their income-generating activities to Papua. While some moved directly to Papua, many returned to Boneoge, investigated migration opportunities through kin networks, and then moved to Papua. Many of those with capital went to smaller towns such as Serui, Nabire, Biak, Timika, or Manokwari, to sell clothes in the market. Many also went to Jayapura and engaged in fishing. Some families, though, remained in Boneoge with the husband going on migrations to Papua to earn money.
- The family returned to Boneoge, and the husband or a son went to work in Hawaii. While it is considered much more pleasant to live and work in Ambon than at sea, the uncertain safety of Ambon, combined with the high wages from Hawaii, convinced many young men that it was a better option than continuing to work in Ambon.
- The family moved back to Boneoge and stayed there, attempting to establish a livelihood in Boneoge. Some used family connections to obtain salaried jobs as drivers of *bemo* (minivans for public transportation) or speedboats (plying the Buton straits from Muna to Baubau). Family networks were important since the vehicles were owned by Boneoge people; owners from other villagers tend to hire their own kin. Those unable to obtain such jobs went fishing, worked as labourers, or mined limestone. The man's decision to stay and work in Boneoge usually took into account his migration options as well as the strength of his desire to avoid returning to Ambon while the violence continued.
- The family moved to Boneoge, and then the man went on migrations to Ambon for several months at a time for work. Some of these continued their old jobs in Ambon, if these were undisturbed by the conflict, while

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outside of the Boneoge diaspora community in Waihaong/Dok moved into it, in many cases, as it was safer during the riots.

others found new jobs. This represents a return to a style of mobility which was more popular before the 1970s.

- The family (or just the man) moved to a location other than Ambon, Hawaii, or Papua, either using kin networks or by attempting a pioneering migration. For example, one of the big men moved his clothes trading business from Ambon to Manado, North Sulawesi, and his employees, Boneoge people, moved with him. This is another benefit of employing co-villagers; it would have been more difficult to ask Ambonese employees to move.
- The family returned from Ambon to Boneoge, and the man shifted to a mobile pattern of trading between islands. Again, this is a fallback to a style of mobility which was much more common before the 1970s. An example of this is La Rau, who travels back and forth to Buru Island (in Maluku) on a particular PELNI ship. In this way he has managed to support his family since the riots.

It can be seen from this that kin networks were instrumental in many of these mobility patterns.[241] Some Boneoge migrants have returned to Ambon but many others have gone to Papua and Hawaii, prompting people to refer to the period since 1999 as the Hawaii era or the Papua era. There was also a flurry of new pioneer migrations to other locations as migrants sought other options. Responses within a particular kin group were not uniform, and (adult) siblings continued to show the dispersal which is common in Boneoge migration networks. It was common for some adult siblings to stay in Boneoge while others moved back to Ambon or went on to Jayapura or elsewhere, with those who were able obtaining a Hawaii contract for a son.

Networks were thus extremely important in enabling Boneoge people to deal with the Ambon riots of 1999. Instead of becoming refugees in camps, many Boneoge people managed to quickly re-establish livelihoods through migration

[241] Aid distributions since 1999 have also affected migration patterns. Since 1999, the national government has paid out several aid packages amounting to Rp144,000 (US$16) per person, and one larger one of Rp3.5 million (US$385) per family, as well as rice aid. This aid sustained families who were attempting to live off meagre earnings in Buton. It also encouraged others who went on migrations to return to the village at the time of aid distribution. When word came of a distribution, a wave of migrants would rush home from Ambon.

networks. Families with widely spread migration networks (and access to capital) managed to establish new livelihoods more quickly than families without strong networks; trader families fared particularly well. Those with the weakest networks tended to fish or mine limestone in Boneoge (undesirable because the former is low-earning, and the latter is back-breaking), or to migrate to Ambon to work as labourers or drivers of *ojek* (motorcycle taxi) or *becak* (pedicab).

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the importance of kinship and patronage in acquiring wealth and status. While in the past, nobles may have used wealth to acquire followers and thus status, now wealthy traders use wealth to acquire more wealth, while acquiring followers (and thus status) along the way. Kinship remains vital to status, as patronage is organized around kinship, through the use of kin-based migration networks. Patronage is no longer organised around nobles or village leaders, but around big men – and not-so-big men, as long as they have enough wealth to sponsor migrations.

Kin-based migration networks, which I have described as centrifugal, attractive, and village-endogamous, show how kinship is utilised in the achievement of *sukses*. Such networks vary considerably between families in Boneoge. The most powerful networks, which have numerous 'nodes' widely spread and a strong capacity to summon, employ, and lend capital to relatives, tend to occur among families who sailed, then moved to Ambon, raised capital, and now trade in Papua – and send their youth to Hawaii. The networks of many other families tend to be capital-poor and much less diverse; those from the farming community of Kampung Baru tend to be in the latter group.

Although patron-client relations have been important in migration since the sailing years and probably much earlier, the current nature of Boneoge migration networks has grown out of political and economic opportunities in the eastern archipelago since the birth of the Indonesian nation. Safety of travel and residence, combined with emerging economic opportunities in urban areas, has led Boneoge people to abandon sailing and farming, and to settle in eastern Indonesian towns. Boneoge diaspora communities have spread, and many

Boneoge people have experienced success in trading, which has enabled them to sponsor migrations and build networks. This has further weakened the position of the nobles and village leaders who controlled patronage distribution in Boneoge under the Sultanate. With the rise of Hawaii migrations, many more Boneoge people are acquiring enough wealth to become traders and further develop the kin-based migration networks.

CHAPTER 7
MODERNIST ISLAM AND FARMING RITUALS

This chapter and the next describe religious change in Boneoge and its relation to shifts in the Boneoge status system. Currently the primary dynamic in religious change is the shift towards modernist Islam, which has led to a host of changes related to the beliefs and practices of Boneoge people. Yet there remain important differences within the village, in particular between modernist Muslims and traditionalist Muslims. A key dispute between modernist Muslims and traditionalists is over the permissibility of holding rituals to propitiate territorial guardian spirits (BM: *miendo wite*) using offerings. While modernist Muslims in Boneoge consider these rituals to be in contradiction with Islam (*syirik* or 'idolatrous'), traditionalists – and especially those who continue to live as farmers – see them as a necessary part of local *adat*, and essential to their wellbeing:

> According to those who are fanatical[242] about religion, these rituals are heretical [*bid'ah*], or false. But for us, there is *adat* and there is *agama*.[243] The rituals are not in contradiction with Islam, even though some people think they are. We stopped the rituals for a while in the past, but many people got sick, so we had to hold them again, in secret.
>
> farmer and *adat* leader

Currently, the modernist faction is winning this debate; the contentious rituals are not held openly, and are not discussed or even mentioned at public gatherings. Some traditionalists, though, continue to hold them, small scale and in secret, since they consider them vital to their livelihoods. The shift towards modernist Islam, and the dispute over propitiating territorial spirits, has many connections with the changes in the status system. This chapter explains the

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[242] The word which I render as 'fanatical' is the Indonesian '*fanatik*'; it has a different sense, though, to that of the English 'fanatical', which carries a negative connotation of 'going too far'. The Indonesian '*fanatik*' has the more value-neutral sense of '*sangat taat*' or 'following all the rules'.

[243] Although the Indonesian word '*agama*' is often translated as 'religion', I do not do so here, since the sense is not the same. *Agama* in Indonesia refers only to world religions such as Islam and Christianity, and excludes local *adat* traditions, some of which would be included under the English term 'religion'.

context of the dispute over the contentious rituals and draws out the implications of these changes for the status of farming. Chapter 8 continues the discussion of religious change and status in Boneoge, by focusing on how these changes are related to changes in the status of elders.

While a general shift towards modernist Islam has occurred throughout the archipelago, this shift is not expressed uniformly; rather, it is expressed in particular ways in each location. In Boneoge the shift towards modernist Islam has manifested in efforts to prohibit traditional harvest festivals and protection rites related to agriculture. I argue that the nature of religious change in Boneoge is related to the success of the Boneoge migrant traders and to the decline of the Wolio Sultanate. The dispute over the rituals is underpinned by larger shifts in religious ideology in Boneoge, and these changes have had important impacts on the status of farming, farmers, and farming-related *adat* knowledge.

7.1 Boneoge Islam

7.1.1 History

The beliefs and practices which constitute Butonese religion have emerged from centuries of diverse influences from such ideologies as animism, Hinduism, Sufism and various waves of Islamic modernism.[244] Ancestor cults, territorial spirits, and birth spirits have long been prominent in Boneoge religion, and may go back to the Austronesian expansion.[245] During the fourteenth century, Buton was in the sphere of influence of the Majapahit empire, and this would have brought Javanese Hindu ideas to Buton. Some of these ideas are still widespread in Buton, such as the belief in reincarnation (see Schoorl 1985).

Islam was being spread in Buton by 1412, and oral histories indicate that it was 1540 when the 6th King of Wolio, Lakilaponto, converted to Islam under the tutelage of Syeik Abdul Wahid, and became the first Sultan (Yunus 1995: 18-20). Although Buton has been an Islamic Sultanate since the sixteenth century, adoption of Muslim beliefs and practices was neither instantaneous nor complete.

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[244] Gibson (2000) has described a similar series of 'global flows' which have over the past centuries influenced ritual practice and belief in South Sulawesi, and has described how contemporary ritual practice continues to make use of various elements of these historical influences.

[245] See Nourse (1999) on birth spirits, and Chambert-Loir and Reid (2002) on ancestor spirits.

As was the case elsewhere the adoption of Islamic beliefs and practices in Buton was intimately related to power hierarchies and political interests. Initial adoption of Islam by the King of Buton offered a new level of legitimation of his power, improving his position with regard to the local chiefs and the *siolimbona* council of *adat* leaders who supervised the Sultan (Vermeij 2000; Schoorl 2003: 154). As mentioned earlier, Islamic influence in Buton spread from the Wolio Sultanate in Baubau outward to the villages in a slow and partial manner, as Islamic knowledge was used as a tool of power by Sultanate officials (Schoorl 2003: 147-50).

During the early stages of Islamic influence, Sufism had a particularly strong impact on both religion and local conceptions of power in Buton; a Sufist version of Islam was used to bolster the power of the Sultanate over the masses (Yunus 1995); according to the Sufist concept that the Sultan was the 'perfect man' (*insan kamil*) who could do anything he wished (ibid.: 112). Sufist Islam, it has been noted, 'allowed Islam and spirit possession to coexist' (Schiller 1997: 205; see also Woodward 1989; Howell 2007).

Later waves of Islamic influence included many attempts to 'purify' pre-Islamic elements from Butonese religion. For instance during the reign of Sultan La Umatti (1688-1695) a brief attempt at purification was made, influenced by the teachings of the Sufi ar-Raniri (Yunus 1995: 69). Between 1825 and 1851 Sultan M. Idrus also pushed to purify local Islam, working with his military chief Haji Abdul Ganiu to ban the use of figurines at graveyards and other practices, following the influence of the Wahabi school (Schoorl 2003: 146), although both men apparently retained their belief in reincarnation (ibid.: 167-8). In the early twentieth century a modernist Muslim movement took hold in Indonesia, and local spirit beliefs which had been tolerated by Sufist Islam were one of their main targets (Howell 2007). In 1926 the modernist group Muhammadiyah arrived in South Sulawesi (and was likely established in Southeast Sulawesi shortly after); this group worked to limit the power of the nobility and to cut out certain practices which its members saw as 'superstition' (Rossler 1997: 277).

The most recent purification effort arrived in Boneoge occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. A central role was played by two Butonese *haji* men who came to live in the Boneoge region and were instrumental in encouraging observance

of the five pillars of Islam and the cessation of spirit-propitiation rituals.[246] During the following decades a variety of contrasting views persisted regarding modernist Islam and spirit worship. It is during this period that the Boneoge agricultural rituals became prohibited.

7.1.2 Contemporary religious practice

Day to day religious life in Boneoge was described in Chapter 4. The widespread observance of Muslim practices such as praying five times per day, fasting during Ramadhan and modernist Muslim prayer ceremonies, however, is relatively recent, according to informants. Boneoge people described the Islam of their parents' generation as 'not deep' or 'in name only', and said that they did not regularly carry out these observances. Although there remains diversity in religious belief and practice in Boneoge, including that related to the agricultural rituals, most Boneoge people now carry out the regular observances typical of modernist Muslims.

The rituals which are considered improper and have been officially discontinued include most rituals of the agriculture ritual cycle including harvest festivals (BM: *bongka ta'o* – the 'opening of the year')[247], and protection rites such as the *kaagono liwu* (BM: 'healing' or 'cleansing' of the village)[248] and the use of *sahiga* (BM: household shrines).[249] The main objection to these rituals

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[246] The men, Kyai Haji Agus Syukur and Kyai Haji Ashari, were said to be from Binongko (in the Tukang Besi Islands) and to have studied Islam extensively in the Middle East.

[247] The main harvest festival was the *bongka ta'o* ('the opening of the year'), celebrating the beginning of the maize harvest. It involved the preparation of various dishes made with maize, the distribution of offerings to feed the spirits, and other activities such as the *pokalapa* (BM) augury, in which elders would throw an *anjelai* stalk against two crisscrossed stalks to see where they would break. This gave a sign as to where planting would be most successful in the following season. It was forbidden to harvest corn before the *bongka ta'o*, since the spirits had not been given their 'share' yet and this could incur their wrath.

[248] The *kaagono liwu* ('healing of the village') ceremony was a vital protection ritual (*tolak bala*) carried out by *adat* leaders, in order to feed, and thereby 'respect' and propitiate, the *miendo wite*. Its central focus was the preparation and distribution of offerings for the *miendo wite*, along with accompanying mantra (*batata*). It used to be held twice yearly, at the changing of the seasons (from west monsoon to east, in May, and from east monsoon to west, in November), to ask that the *miendo wite* not cause illness or misfortune in the coming season. These are also the times of planting corn, so the ritual served as protection for the crop about to be planted. The offerings, consisting of particular foods laid out on leaves atop woven bamboo dishes, were set down in particular potent places around the village.

[249] Household shrines, called *sahiga* (or *sariga* in standard *bahasa* Muna and in *bahasa* Wolio), were used to respect and feed spirits in order to protect the members of the household. The *sahiga* consisted of a small table and a wooden box, placed on a white cloth. The box contained offerings of betel nut and associated condiments, and tobacco, replaced monthly. Household

concerns the fact that they involve offerings being given to spirits in order to ask for something in return.

Since the late 1960s, the *kaagono liwu* is no longer held openly, although farmers have held it secretly, in a reduced form, as mentioned in the quote at the beginning of this chapter. Similarly, the *bongka ta'o* is no longer held, although the maize harvest is often celebrated informally through feasting, without the propitiation elements which were the vital part of the *bongka ta'o*. *Sahiga* shrines were used by every household before the 1950s, but by 2000 no houses displayed them prominently, and modernist informants stressed that they were a thing of the past – and one which they evidently found embarrassing. However, traditionalist informants confirmed that some people still use them covertly, in restricted ways, for instance foregoing the ritual *haroa* meal with neighbours and instead merely preparing the offerings for the *sahiga* inside the house, and storing the *sahiga* in the attic afterwards.[250] While no longer arguing their case in public, traditionalists defended this secretive use of *sahiga* as vital to their health: 'most people disposed of their *sahiga* when they came to be seen as *syirik*, but then we were forced to make new ones, since everyone was getting sick'. That is, the spirits brought sickness upon the people until they resumed their *sahiga* practices.[251]

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rituals were also held yearly, with additional offerings, *batata* recitations, and a ceremonial meal with some neighbours called a *haroa sahiga*.

[250] The *haroa* prayer meal is a long-standing Butonese tradition, somewhat similar to a Javanese *slametan,* where neighbours gather in formal clothing to say Islamic prayers in order to give thanks, and then eat together. In the past the *haroa* was traditionally used to entreat spirits for safety or good fortune. The centrepiece of the *haroa* is the preparation of specific foods in particular amounts, served on elaborately decorated *talang* dishes, which are offerings for the spirits (but which are eaten by humans after the ceremony is over). The essential ingredients of a *haroa* are the foods, the prayers, and incense which is burned while the prayers are said. In Boneoge, *haroa* were held on fixed occasions in the Arabic calendar (such as at *Maulud*, the birth of the prophet), as well as when necessary in order to entreat or appease spirits over something in particular. Now some households have stopped holding *haroa*, and for many of those that continue, the propitiation aspect has become deemphasised.

[251] There were other practices which were discontinued in the 1960s as well due to their alleged idolatrous nature. For instance, a mystical item used to predict good fortune was allegedly confiscated by the military around this time. This item was a piece of cloth called *kain kahunsa'ao* (meaning something like 'regalia cloth') (I was also told that it was called *lenso* or *kakompono a'eno Murhum*, the latter meaning 'Murhum's sock'). It was said to have been used to wrap the injured foot of Sultan Murhum, and was a sacred item in Boneoge, used in divination ceremonies. The cloth would be wound on one's foot, the foot placed on the ground, and then the cloth opened. Depending on how the cloth unwound, one would know where good fortune would be found in the coming season. For instance, if the tip of the cloth pointed out to the sea, then the good fortune was to be found fishing. If the tip pointed to Muna district, then the good fortune

The contentious rituals are all based on beliefs about spirits. Traditional Boneoge cosmology admits of at least three kinds of spirits: malevolent spirits, ancestor spirits (*sumanga*), and guardian spirits (*miendo wite*). Malevolent spirits originate from humans engaging in black magic (*dhoti*), causing people to fear wandering alone at night in quiet and dark places; sudden death or mysterious illnesses can be attributed to their influence.[252] Ancestor spirits are believed to be able to protect humans from misfortune, assist in achieving success, or, if not propitiated, cause illness or misfortune (ancestor spirits are discussed further in the next chapter).[253]

It is guardian spirits (territorial spirits) which underpin the contentious rituals. The Muna language term for these spirits, *miendo wite*, literally means the 'people of the land', although a better gloss would be 'spirits of the land'.[254] The Indonesian gloss for *miendo wite* is *tuan tanah*, meaning 'lords of the land' (this phrase in Indonesian can also mean 'landlord' in the context of rental property). Guardian spirits are said to 'own' (*punya*), 'guard' (*jaga*), 'wait at' (*tunggu*), or 'control' (*pegang*) particular places, such as the gardens and the forest where Boneoge people go to get firewood.[255] *Miendo wite* are also present at places which are perceived to be spiritually powerful, such as caves, water springs, and large or unusually shaped trees (see next chapter). Many names for places in and around Boneoge resemble names of people, for they are named after the spirit who 'watches' or 'owns' that place. The entire landscape is controlled by such spirits, which have the power to grant bountiful harvests or to cause crop failures

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would be found in that region. Its loss was unfortunate, said one traditionalist, as it could also confer invulnerability in combat.

[252] A *kabhindu boroko*, for instance, is a human who can send its head out at night to eat babies; there is one suspected *kabhindu boroko* in Boneoge.

[253] Related to ancestor spirits are birth spirits, which are connected to the placenta of a newborn child, and go on to become a spiritual 'elder sibling' (BM: *yisano*) which watches over the child.

[254] Aragon (2000: 169) found ambiguity in whether spirits were single or plural in some contexts, as is the case in Boneoge when the Indonesian *tuan tanah* is used. *Bahasa* Muna is clearer, since the plural *miendo wite* is clearly different to the singular *mieno wite*. The mantras which I quote below, however, use both singular (such as *mieno ponue* 'the person of the forest') and plural forms (*komiu*, 'you all'), echoing the ambiguity found by Aragon.

[255] When speaking Indonesian, people often refer to these spirits as '*yang pegang tempat ini*' (the one who controls this place), '*yang punya tempat ini*' (the one who owns this place) or, in the Muna language, '*kofewa'ano*' (BM: the one who owns). *Miendo wite* are also sometimes referred to as '*sangia*', a Muna word more accurately referring to the sacred sites which they guard, or '*nabi*', an Indonesian word meaning 'prophet' (such as the Prophet Muhammad).

(though either poor weather or attack by pests), and to guarantee good health or to inflict illness and misfortune upon humans.

'Owning' a place does not refer to ownership in the western sense of private property (see Aragon 2000: 168), but more to a responsibility of care, combined with an authority and power which must be respected. A similar notion of power is at play when people refer to a criminal gang leader in a market as 'the one who owns this place' (*'yang pegang tempat ini'*); the implication is that he controls it, and will oppose any challenges to his authority. Since the *miendo wite* own/control particular places, anyone passing through or using these places must act respectfully towards the spirits, including rendering offerings (of betel nut, tobacco, and particular types of foods), or risk punishment.[256] Failing to give appropriate offerings will render *miendo wite* angry. A farmer harvesting crops is taking something from a realm controlled by the spirits, and so must render a tribute to the spirits in order to placate them.

If *miendo wite* become angered, there can be disastrous consequences for humans. The harvest can fail, the crops can be destroyed by pigs and monkeys, or people can fall ill, suffer accidents, or die. Thus it is of the utmost importance that humans respect the *miendo wite* by giving offerings. As one informant explained, regarding a spirit based at a tree: 'if you climb the tree, the *miendo wite* can get angry...you have to give it its due [i.e. its share of food] so that it doesn't bother you.' The contentious rituals were the key methods of delivering offerings to the territorial spirits which surround Boneoge, in order that the village be free from sickness, and so that the farmers would enjoy prosperous harvests.

Delivery of offerings should be accompanied by appropriate mantra (BM: *batata*) in order to communicate this respect. La Asadi, an *adat* leader, told me that when he enters the forest near the village to get firewood, he brings an offering of betel nut, and pronounces a mantra (in *bahasa* Muna) as follows:

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[256] Besides betel nut and tobacco, common elements of offerings include rice, fish, chicken, eggs, bananas, and young coconuts.

Taesalo nae imihi'intu miendo ponue, miendo kalibua	We ask you all, people of the forest
Mai daesoso'o komiu, daepana'o komiu	Come and smoke, come and chew betel nut
Imihi'intu saudumagani kainsamia	It is you who protect us
Labua tahato nainia	That's why we have come here
Ndo bhae imihi'intu awuamani saudumagani kainsamia	It is you, our grandparents, who protect us

Betel nut used to be the customary item given to guests in Butonese houses, as well as to spirits, and most households possessed a brass betel nut set for ritual purposes. Although chewing betel nut is now the hobby of only a minority of elderly women and many households no longer have betel nut sets, it remains an important symbolic item in ritual contexts. In this *batata*, La Asadi emphasises the caring and protecting role played by the guardian spirits as a way of acknowledging their power and asking for their protection.[257] Another example of a typical *mantra* addressed to *miendo wite* (again, in *bahasa* Muna) asks for forgiveness for the intrusion into their domain, and again emphasises the rendering of an offering:

Taesalo maafu taomangka	We ask your forgiveness, as we come through here
Naamohakomiua tabhea taomangka	I did not see you all, excuse me, we are coming through
Mai dofuma'ao komiu	I invite you to eat
Aini dawumiu	This is your portion

The words 'your portion' convey the belief that the spirits are entitled to the offering; it is thus understandable if they attack when deprived of 'their portion'.

Rituals to propitiate these spirits, although carried out by the entire village as late as the 1950s, are now deemed by many villagers to be inappropriate and sinful. However, there remain a variety of views on these contentious rituals. Modernist Muslims in the village hold that the rituals are *syirik*, never give

[257] The use of the word 'grandparents' might seem to suggest that ancestor spirits rather than *miendo wite* were being propitiated. However, this is not the case; La Asadi clarified that 'grandparents' was being used as a general term of respect for those older (or higher status) than us, in speaking to the *miendo wite*. He clearly distinguished between these two types of spirits.

offerings themselves, and also deny the existence of *miendo wite*. At the other extreme, traditionalists (and especially farmers among them) believe in the existence of the *miendo wite* and feel that it would be misguided and dangerous to fail to propitiate them through the appropriate rituals. Some people, however, take a more intermediate position, where they acknowledge the existence of the *miendo wite* (or are uncertain of their non-existence) but feel that it would be *syirik* to actually give offerings to them. Some of these, although not delivering offerings, still mumble a mantra or two under the breath as they enter the realm of a *miendo wite*, just to be safe. Some of those who do not give offerings still think of the *miendo wite* if there is an unexplained illness in the family, believing that it may be caused by angry spirits.[258]

Among these different views, the modernist view has achieved dominance in Boneoge. Importantly, this view is dominant not just by virtue of being held by more people, but because it is held by most of the most powerful and high status people of the village. Traditionalist views persist on the sidelines, but are not discussed openly on public occasions, as their adherents realise that they have already lost the public debate.

The neighbourhood of Kampung Baru is seen as traditionalist, and indeed most residents, even those who are no longer farming, feel that the rituals are necessary. When I asked an elite modernist about offerings which I had seen laid out beside at a particular sacred site, he said dismissively that they were 'probably put there by Kampung Baru people'. The modernist/traditionalist divide deepens the separation between Kampung Baru and Boneoge proper.

The terms 'traditionalist' and 'modernist' have been used in different ways to understand religion in Indonesia.[259] As discussed in Chapter 1, when using such

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[258] *Miendo wite* which were seen as particularly powerful could be approached (with offerings) to ask for favours or blessings, such as wealth or pregnancy. Some traditionalists continue to do so, but since this practice is widely seen as *syirik*, they do so covertly. Some of the people who consider this practice to be *syirik* believe that the spirits *do* exist and *can* help us, but that it is wrong to use their services. One informant even told me proudly that people from far and wide came to entreaty at a particular sacred site in Boneoge, while at the same time asserting that he never did so since it was *syirik*.

[259] Ellen (1983: 54-64) has characterized variants of Islam in Indonesia as follows: *Kejawen* (which has strong Javanese spiritual traditions), traditional scripturalism (of which Geertz's '*santri*' is a variant), and two types of reformists: Muslim fundamentalists (who are interested in 'purifying' Islam by going back to the original teachings and rejecting local cultural mixing) and Islamic

labels to discuss questions of religious contestation and change, it is important to pay attention to the local context, which includes political and economic developments as well as considerations of power. These issues are taken up in the next section.

7.2 Farming in the Sultanate, Trading in the Nation

Modernist Islam has been strengthening throughout Indonesia over the past half century, supported by various economic and political developments. In Boneoge, the decline of agriculture has influenced the form of the current religious contestation. On a slightly broader scale, the transition in political power from the era of the Wolio Sultanate to the nation-state of Indonesia has had far-reaching implications for questions of religion in Boneoge. Finally, new patterns of mobility and new trading livelihoods have also affected religious change in Boneoge. This section discusses these three factors.

7.2.1 The Decline of agriculture

Boneoge modernists have not attempted to prohibit all *adat* rituals, or even all *adat* rituals with elements which might be seen to be in contradiction to (modernist) Islam. Rituals such as *posumanga* ancestor rituals and rituals for the protection of a newly built house (which incorporate auguries and offerings), for example, continue (albeit with some modification – see next chapter), while agricultural and protection rituals were stopped outright, or at least pushed out of mainstream public life.

This raises the question of why purification efforts have focused on these particular rituals. One of the main reasons is that the majority of Boneoge people, and especially the elite, are no longer farming. During the 1960s, a majority of

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modernists (who have a narrower role for religion in life, and emphasise pragmatism and rationalism). These two reformist streams are referred to by Geertz as 'pious' vs. 'secular' modernism, and by Peacock as 'reformism' vs. 'progressivism'. Abdullah (cited in Ellen 1983) has linked the first group of reformists (Ellen's 'fundamentalists') with migrants returning to the home village, and the second (Ellen's 'modernists') with migrants remaining permanently in the *rantau*. Ellen also emphasises the fact that these categories are not in practice clearly separable, and it is important not to let labelling substitute for careful analysis of religious expression in local contexts. In the Boneoge case, what I call 'modernist Islam' best fits into Ellen's 'fundamentalist' category, which concurs with Abdullah's assertion that this variant is often brought home by returning migrants.

Boneoge households had gardens, and many lived exclusively from agriculture. By 2006, only 8% of workers were farming as their primary livelihood, and very few farmed as a supplementary economic activity.[260] The few remaining farmers in Boneoge are mostly elderly and poor. This section focuses on the reasons for the decline of agriculture.

The agricultural crops in Boneoge are primarily maize and cassava. The main planting of the year is in November; maize is planted first, and cassava is planted shortly after. Planting of maize is carried out communally, with kin and neighbours being called to assist a farmer plant his garden on an auspicious day. A form of rotating-fallow cultivation is used, wherein gardens are used for three years and then left fallow for five or six years. The corn is ready to harvest by February or March and the cassava by approximately July. Before planting, the garden site is chosen, and then cleared by cutting the grass and trees from it. These are left for some time to dry, and then burned to provide nutrients for the soil. The stone walls which serve as fences (BM: *tondo*) are repaired, and then the seeds are planted. After planting, the garden must be guarded in order to keep pests out, and weeded periodically, but the labour is not intensive. Farmers complain that although they used to manage two maize plantings per year, now fertility conditions (and the prevalence of pests) allow only one. A *bhisano kaampo* (agricultural ritual expert) determines where people will plant their gardens, using both ritual knowledge and practical knowledge of the soil, in order to choose a location which is fertile and will not bring misfortune in the form of pests for the crops or illness for the farmers. Traditionally, planting and harvest rituals served to propitiate the guardian spirits (*miendo wite*) so that the harvest is plentiful, and the people are not plagued by illness for disturbing the *miendo wite*.

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[260] In the data presented earlier from my own survey of occupations in Boneoge, farming was the primary occupation of 79 workers out of a total of 987 (8% of all workers). Farming was a secondary occupation for very few of these. In 2003 a national Agriculture Census was carried out by BPS (*Badan Pusat Statistik*, Central Body of Statistics), and I obtained a copy of the data for Boneoge. The number of households involved with agriculture, i.e. those which had a positive answer for any of questions 5-10 (the other questions are related to fishing and other activities rather than agriculture), was 51, out of 654 households in Boneoge (they counted hearths, not houses). Their figure of 51 of 654 households still active in agriculture works out to 8% as well.

Farming has declined not only in terms of the number of people engaging in it, but also in terms of its status as a livelihood. The few remaining farmers are all of very low status. There are no wealthy farmers in Boneoge, and farming is now seen as a livelihood which has no potential to bring wealth and success. Farming has come to stand for poverty, and is avoided by the young who prefer to migrate to chase their dreams of achieving wealth and success. The move away from agriculture is by no means particular to Boneoge, of course, being a widespread phenomenon in Indonesia (Booth 2004: 29) and indeed globally. However, the decline in Boneoge has been very rapid, with an almost total abandonment of farming over three decades.

The primary reason for the decline of agriculture was the increasing availability of more economically lucrative migration opportunities. Agriculture in Buton has long been difficult, with its rocky infertile land and lack of rivers for irrigation. Butonese people have thus sought maritime livelihoods over the past centuries, when regional conditions permit.

Before the 1950s, most Boneoge people maintained large gardens, producing food for subsistence and often an excess which could be traded. The middle part of the twentieth century was an insecure time in the region, with World War II followed by a number of armed struggles in eastern Indonesia after the declaration of Indonesia's independence.[261] During the 1950s and 1960s, many Boneoge men left the village to earn money, but the popular form of migration during those years was to sail on wooden sailing ships transporting people and cargo throughout the archipelago. While their husbands were absent, women maintained gardens in Boneoge, often sleeping in garden huts to keep watch over the crops. Farming was an essential part of the household livelihood, providing the women with subsistence while the men were away, and allowing the family to survive in case the man's voyage did not result in earnings. Women were the primary workers in the gardens, and this 'feminisation of agriculture' lowered

[261] During the late Sukarno period, the outer islands of Indonesia were not yet fully integrated into the new state of Indonesia, and political upheavals in the 1950s and 1960s in Sulawesi and Maluku made the region unsafe. In the 1950s the Darul Islam rebels were driven out of South Sulawesi and came to Southeast Sulawesi, where they were seen as '*gerombolan*', or gangs of bandits.

the status of farming as an occupation since it was associated with women (see Rodenburg 1997: 206).[262]

It was not until the 1970s that the region was safe and politically stable, and at this time the economy of Ambon began to boom and provide economic opportunities which attracted many migrants. As described in Chapter 3, many Boneoge men went to Ambon at this time, often taking their families with them. Agriculture in Boneoge went into steep decline at that time. Those families who settled in Ambon left their gardens in Buton to grow over. As economic opportunities in Ambon became increasingly reliable, even those women who remained in Boneoge while their husbands worked in Ambon had mostly stopped gardening by 1990, since their husbands could provide regular remittances from their earnings in Ambon. Thus for sailor families, agriculture was first relegated to a secondary occupation to provide subsistence while the men were away, and then dropped altogether as opportunities in Ambon became reliable. Many of these ex-sailors became traders in Ambon, and once a migrant began trading, they did not return to agriculture. These families were oriented towards trading and *sukses*, and farming came to be seen by many villagers as undesirable, something from their parents' generation which they had progressed beyond.

Those families who did not participate in the sailing era, however, had a different experience of migration to Ambon from that of the sailors. The farming communities of Mawaruanu and Kampung Lama were based in the hills above Boneoge until around 1970, and remained primarily dependent on farming until that time (in contrast to the people of Boneoge proper who, as we have seen, descended to the coast around 1910). People from these farming communities migrated to Ambon in the 1970s, but tended to plant gardens in the areas surrounding Ambon rather than work as fish traders in central Ambon (see Chapter 3). These farmers often worked in the off-season as urban labourers, and their children tended to work exclusively as urban labourers rather than

[262] Migration brings men experience with the modern world, while women are 'left behind' in the village. That is, women are not only physically left behind, but they also remain in agricultural labour, which has come to be seen as 'traditional' work in contrast with trading, so that the women are also 'left behind' in terms of progress towards modernity (see Rodenburg 1997: 206).

farmers.[263] This is why the influx of refugees from Ambon in 1999 did not lead to a significant rejuvenation of Boneoge agriculture; people were no longer used to farming, and preferred urban wage-based occupations.[264] Even though they are not primarily farmers, most of the people from Mawaruanu and Kampung Lama, who now live in Matoka and Kampung Baru, continue to be stigmatised as 'farmers' (even if they are not) by the people of Boneoge proper.

This turn away from farming, then, is not entirely due to the availability of other occupations with higher earnings. For most Boneoge people, labouring is preferable to farming, even when the earnings are similar. Farming has come to be stigmatised in Boneoge, being associated with low status, persistent poverty and backwardness, and Boneoge people tend to avoid working as farmers if they have any other option.

Several other factors have also contributed to the decline of agriculture in Boneoge. One is diet: although in the 1960s most Boneoge people ate cassava and maize as staples, and only the rich ate rice (since it cannot be grown in Boneoge's unfertile soils, it must be purchased), now most Boneoge people prefer rice, and are able to afford it. This includes most farmers. This has lowered the demand for cassava and maize, and thus the prices for these products, and this in turn makes farming even less lucrative.

A second factor is that once farming began to decline, the need to continually watch over gardens in order to prevent pests from eating crops intensified (pigs attack the gardens by night, monkeys by daylight). With many people gardening, the burden of watching the gardens was shared, but as some people left farming behind, fewer people were watching the borders and these pests managed to destroy substantial portions of each year's crops. This drove more people out of agriculture.

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[263] A pattern is visible here: farmers do not find it easy to become traders. Farming has declined in Boneoge and trading is on the rise, but this does not mean farmers have become traders. Rather, many farmers have become urban labourers, while it was the sailors who have managed to convert to urban trading in Ambon.

[264] Some returnees did fall back on farming in Boneoge; however they quickly found other options such as mining limestone. Farmers only earn money after the harvest, whereas many people express the desire to earn a regular cash wage. Mining provided the opportunity to make more, and receive money more often, than farming.

Ironically, a further blow to agriculture in Boneoge came in the form of rice aid which the government provided to refugees from Ambon from 2000 to 2003. The huge flow of returnees to Buton led to a massive aid effort, with rice distributed every three or four months to all returnee families in Buton for a period of several years. Many returnees treated this rice as a commodity, selling it in order to obtain cash and satisfy their other needs. Thus the market was flooded with rice, the price dropped, and this in turn pushed down the price of cassava and maize (since people preferred rice to those products). The lowered prices of cassava and maize drove some of the last remaining farmers out of agriculture.

To return to the contentious rituals, these rituals were most desired, and defended, by farmers, since they played a key role in ensuring good harvests by propitiating the spirits. By the late 1990s, the farmers were not only a small minority; they were also a stigmatised group with low status and a lack of power in village affairs. Thus it is no surprise that the modernists of the village, no longer engaged in farming, selected these farming rituals as a target of religious modernisation, and were successful in marginalising them as inappropriate historical relics.

7.2.2 From Sultanate to nation-state

The religious ideology underpinning the contentious rituals was also undercut by an important political change which occurred in Buton after World War II. Not only was Buton integrated into the Indonesian state (officially in 1945 but in practice over a decade later), but in 1960 the Wolio Sultanate was officially discontinued, upon the death of the 38th Sultan. Processes of political integration coincided with, and further reinforced, the shift towards modernist Islam, by weakening the ideological framework out of which the contentious rituals grew.

The end of the Sultanate deeply undermined the entire politico-religious ideology in Buton, in which the Sultan was the protector of physical safety and good harvests in the realm. Harvest rituals and protection rites were carried out by village leaders who also performed political functions under the Sultanate (Schoorl 2003). Once the Sultanate was no longer in existence, and Buton was integrated into the new nation-state of Indonesia, the authority of the traditional

village leadership was eviscerated. The traditional village leadership councils which existed under the Sultanate (the '*Sara*' and the '*Hukumu*') fell apart gradually, as outgoing leaders officials were not replaced. The Village Government Law of 1979 then formally extinguished their authority. This meant that many villages were led by a *lurah* (village head) appointed by the local bureaucracy. *Lurah* generally originated in other parts of the province, and often had little desire to support local rituals since these rituals did not legitimate their power (Bartels 2003: 138-9).

These political changes, occurring alongside the spread of influential new ideologies of democracy and modernity, weakened the traditional system of rank (differentiating nobles, commoners and slaves), reduced the status of the remaining traditional village leaders, and eroded the value of particular types of *adat* knowledge.

When the Sultanate was officially discontinued, its role as arbiter of local Islam was taken over by the Department of Religion. The Indonesian government was interested in promoting its short-list of permissible 'world religions' (*agama*) over local religions, in order to strengthen and promote the modernist, nationalist and developmentalist agenda. This means that modernist Islam was prioritised at the expense of more locally inflected forms, such as that promoted by the Wolio Sultanate; the authenticity of local religions was questioned or dismissed (see Lineton 1975a: 131). Nationalism and modernist Islam were taught at the same time through government schools, using the Indonesian language (see Bowen 1993: 327), which had a further integrative effect. Islam now functions to integrate Butonese people into the Indonesian nation (Schoorl 2003: 156). In Boneoge modernist Islam acted as a vehicle for expressing nationalism, and for distinguishing oneself from other villagers who were less 'Indonesian' and less 'modern'.[265]

As noted in Chapter 1, the Indonesian state attempted to stamp out spirit-based rituals throughout the archipelago (Lineton 1975a: 67), and during the late 1960s utilised the spectre of communism to encourage villagers to more fully

[265] As Ellen put it, 'In parts of the outer islands [Islam] may express Indonesianness in contrast with more local tradition...or in contrast to local tribal peoples less integrated into market and state' (1983: 73).

embrace one of the five officially sanctioned world religions. In Boneoge, villagers wanting to carry out agricultural rituals or visit important ancestors' graves in the hills above the village were well aware of the dangers of being branded a communist due to these activities. The military had a strong presence down to village level and many village heads during this time, including Boneoge's, were military officers. Citizens could show their commitment to modernity and nationalism by eschewing such local religious practices and adopting modernist Islam. Facing this dynamic, many people, as Bartels (who did research in Maluku) put it, 'embraced Islamic universalism over ethnic parochialism' (2003: 138).

In the era of regional autonomy after 1999, there were attempts in various parts of Indonesia to resurrect Sultanates in order to re-assert traditional authority in the spirit of regional identity (van Klinken 2004). In Buton La Ode Manarfa, the eldest son of the last Sultan of Buton (La Ode Falihi) who died in 1960, laid claim to being the Sultan of Buton.[266] In public speeches around the time of my fieldwork, rather than emphasising feudal authority or mystical power, he preferred to emphasise the Sultan's role as a 'spreader of Islam' (*penyebar Islam*). This seems to indicate a recognition that asserting feudal authority as Sultan or mystical power as the controller of the realm would likely have received a lukewarm response from the public in this era of democracy and modernist Islam. Instead he emphasised his legitimacy as a purveyor of Islam. At one speech I attended, La Ode Manarfa explained that Abdul Wahid, who allegedly brought Islam to Buton in the fifteenth century, had been sent from Mecca to make the Sultan of Buton the '5th Caliph (*Khalifatul Khamis*) of Islam'[267], with the job of fostering Islam in the world. La Ode Manarfa continued, 'even if the Butonese government is no more, I am still the 5th Caliph!...Don't mess around with the Sultan of Buton, he has a holy task of

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[266] La Ode Manarfa was never officially inaugurated as the Sultan (and furthermore his position as eldest son of the Sultan does not guarantee he would have been chosen, according to Butonese custom), and the Sultanate has not been re-established.

[267] Yunus describes how Abdul Wahid presided over the coronation of Lakilaponto as the first Sultan of Buton, and designated him Sultan Qā'im ad-Dīn al-Khalīfah al-Khāmis (1995: 20). Yunus also states that the Sultan was considered the '*khalifah khamis*', meaning the 5th Caliph after the four *rasyidun* who followed Muhammad's death (Abu Bakar, Umar, Usman, and Ali) (ibid.: 118).

Islam!' These statements attempt to claim legitimacy within the now prevailing ideology of modernist Islam, rather than claiming feudal authority, which modernist Islam often resists.[268]

The notion of modernity has also lent support to modernist Islam in its struggle with local religion. Those who have adopted modernist Islam often present themselves as 'modern' in contrast to 'traditional' villagers who retain parochial religious beliefs and rituals. Indeed villagers in Boneoge often dismissed the contentious rituals as 'what old people do', implying that they have been superseded by modern religious developments. It has been pointed out that aspiring elites sometimes 'perform modernity' (Schein 1999) by, for example, proclaiming their lack of belief in traditional things, in order to be seen as cosmopolitan and modern (see Pigg 1996). Schrauwers, writing on the Pamona of central Sulawesi, found that local elites presented themselves as modern in contrast to 'traditional' farmers, whose traditionalism kept them in poverty (2000: 21). A similar dynamic occurred in Boneoge, where farmers, and things associated with farming such as farming *adat* knowledge and farming rituals, acquired a deeply negative stigma of backward traditionalism.

As we have seen, Boneoge people moved down to the coast in two main waves, around 1910 and around 1970. Those who descended first, and became the community of Boneoge proper, became more closely integrated into the regional polity (the Wolio Sultanate, and then the state of Indonesia) than did those who descended around 1970. Living in Boneoge proper offered a number of new experiences. It is a concentrated community, in contrast to the dispersed clusters of farmers who lived in the hills, and some people from Baubau came and married into the coastal village, increasing its diversity. Villagers were introduced to a new level of administrative order in their daily lives; the state intruded even more into daily life during the late 1960s and early 1970s as Suharto's New Order government imposed 'new order' on Buton. In the early 1970s, the new village head in Boneoge, a soldier, forced villagers to move all the houses into rows (traditional stilt houses of Boneoge can be lifted by a few dozen men), in order to build a grid of streets in the village. This facilitated the

[268] A similar transition was described earlier in the case of some nobles in Buton who undertake the *hajj*, then drop their noble title (La Ode) in favour of a new post-*hajj* name.

mapping of the village, and its division into smaller administrative units for ease of governing. Living at the coast exposed one to schools, government health centres, and family planning staff, who produced various data on the villagers. People at the coast also learned the Indonesian language; in the 1960s, many farmers living in the hills did not speak Indonesian.

These changes are somewhat typical for a move from what James Scott has called a 'nonstate space' to a 'state space', or from indirect rule to direct rule (Scott 1998), where people become 'bureaucratically visible, through technologies such as maps and census' (Li 2001: 43). This shift, then, was much more than just a change in the location of their houses; it represented a whole new lifestyle of being administered, educated, disciplined, counted, classified, and ordered, by the state. Members of the second wave have had much briefer experience of being in a state space and, given the close association between the state and modernist Islam, it is not surprising that they have less enthusiasm for modernist Islam than do people who 'joined the state' 60 years earlier.

Overall, the end of feudalism meant that the rank system, traditional leadership positions and particular types of *adat* knowledge were less important for status. A new elite emerged, those who achieved wealth as migrant traders in urban centres of eastern Indonesia (and who tended to be from Boneoge proper). They emerged as wealthy, capitalist, nationalist, modern, urbanised elites, and their Islam was modernist. Given that they are not interested in farming, they do not seek to protect the continuity of harvest rituals but rather are leading the charge against them.

7.2.3 Mobility and trade

Boneoge migration patterns have been a key factor in determining the direction of religious change in the village. It has been the case for centuries that travellers tend to appeal to more universal belief systems:

> Once away from his own familiar landscape, the traveler was at the mercy of unknown spirits manipulated by his enemies....Those who left the village world for trade, warfare, cash cropping, or service to a new lord were in need of universally valid values and identity....animism is not readily portable (Reid 1993: 159-60).

Modernist Islam often spreads in urban centres where Muslims of various ethnicities emphasise common religious practices in establishing social connections. Village-specific spirit-based agricultural rituals and protection rites would weaken this common Muslim identity, and are often de-emphasised. Thus Bowen found that in Aceh, migration practices were linked with a 'sense of detachment from place' that 'characterized the new socio-religious ideas' (1993: 33). Boneoge migrants who settled in Ambon and other cities from the 1970s found that displaying a more widely shared modernist Muslim identity brought increased social benefits within those communities. Boneoge migrants who lived for decades in these urban Muslim communities in Ambon (and elsewhere) are among the most stalwart opponents of the contentious rituals.

This applies most strongly to those Boneoge migrants who found employment in urban centres, not to those who lived in kin clusters and established gardens on the outskirts of Ambon. For these migrants, both their continued dependence on farming and their clustered residential style would have facilitated the persistence of beliefs and practices related to territorial spirits. It is the urban migrants who abandoned farming as a livelihood and lived in ethnically mixed (but Muslim-dominated) suburbs that would have benefited more by shifting towards modernist Islam.

Migration affects religious change not just because people share the same space with Muslims of different ethnicities, however. Even more powerful religious change results from the economic transformations which result from new migration-based livelihoods (Gardner 1995: 234). Economic transformation in Boneoge was significant from the 1970s, with hundreds of migrants becoming settled urban traders and some achieving significant wealth. The economic success of traders has attracted others to their version of Islam – a modernist one. Economic success has impacted upon religious change for centuries: as Reid put it, writing about the seventeenth century:

> The process of religious change, therefore, was in part the natural attraction of the ritual practices of those who seemed most successful in the new world of commerce (1993: 160).

Any group with economic success has the potential to exert disproportionate influence over the direction of religious change,[269] but it is common that traders achieve economic success and influence religious change in the direction of modernist Islam. Pelras has also seen trade having a crucial role in shifts in religious ideology in South Sulawesi: 'trade favoured the birth and development of a commoner trading class...more prone to reject ancient religion and mythology, open to a more egalitarian Islamic ideology' (Pelras 1998: 25). Since the 1920s the members of this new economic elite have often joined the modernist Muslim organization Muhammadiyah (Pelras 2000).[270]

In Boneoge, the economic success achieved by those who converted to a trading lifestyle thus further strengthened the shift towards modernist Islam in Boneoge. The successful traders achieved high status in Boneoge and play central roles in Boneoge affairs, which enabled them to actively exert more influence on the direction of religious change in Boneoge. Also, other villagers sought to emulate them, following the 'natural attraction' of rituals which have brought success to others. The experiences of these traders in migrating and converting to non-agricultural livelihoods also influenced the particular focus of purification efforts: the farming rituals of which they no longer had need.

7.3 Ideological Shifts

Prohibiting rituals does not, of course, configure an instant change in how people perceive the world. Rather, religious change takes place through multiple and gradual shifts in underlying ideologies, shared by an increasing proportion of villagers, where the cessation of particular rituals may contribute to the prioritising of one ideology over another in the longer term. Shifts in ideologies

[269] For example, Geertz, in a study of a Javanese village, found that the religious innovators were also the economic innovators (Geertz 1963: 127-8).

[270] Trade and modernist Islam have been said to fit well together (Bowen 1993: 34), which brings to mind Weber's (1958) argument about the affinity between Protestantism and capitalism. However, Ellen argues that comparing the influence of Islam on trade with Weber's argument about Protestantism and capitalism is misleading (1983: 71-2). He argues that early Islam was less egalitarian and more mystical than Protestantism, and had a different morality of commerce (more collectivist rather than individualist). He concludes that Islam did not promote commerce to the same degree that Protestantism promoted capitalist development. In any case, I am not arguing that modernist Islam assisted people in becoming traders, but rather that Boneoge traders tended to also become modernist Muslims, and then later were in a position to spread those beliefs in Boneoge.

are also likely to be connected to a host of other factors as people strive to utilise their metaphysical ideas in relation to real-world problems. In this section I describe three important ideological shifts which have taken place in Boneoge, all related to power issues: the progressive disenchantment of the land; the shift from Buton as the centre of mystical power to Mecca as the centre of Islam; and the shift from trying to avoid errors which anger fickle spirits to trying to avoid sins against an explicit moral (Muslim) code. In discussing these transitions, I focus more attention on the beliefs which are on the wane. These 'old' ideas remain important to some people, and tensions clearly remain between the 'old ways' and the modernist Muslim way of thinking, but the general direction of change is clear. Ideological shifts such as these underpin broader shifts in the status system.

7.3.1 Disenchantment of the landscape

Boneoge people a generation ago saw the landscape around the village of Boneoge as imbued with mystical potency, represented by guardian spirits, and concentrated in particular sites. This mystical potency required people to be careful in how they moved and behaved in particular places, but it also offered the possibility of utilising this potency to access desirable outcomes such as health and prosperity. Now, many people no longer believe in these spirits, and the move away from farming combined with the prohibition of the rituals to propitiate them is eroding such beliefs where they still persist. The decline in these beliefs signal a fundamental shift in religious ideology, removing power from the land and placing it in the hands of God, to be accessed through proper modernist observances.[271]

The potency of the land is represented by the guardian spirits (*miendo wite*) which 'guard', 'own', or 'take care of' various places. These spirits must be acknowledged, respected, and propitiated in particular ways or they may cause harm to humans (as described earlier). In addition, the power of the land can be used to obtain protection during journeys or in battle, or good fortune in economic endeavours. It was common for Butonese to ask for blessings from the

[271] Disenchantment of the land is understood to be a common part of religious rationalisation (Schrauwers 2000: 17-8; Bowen 1993: 321)

'land of Buton' or (focusing on the Wolio polity) the 'land of Wolio', for protection during journeys. Upon arriving in a foreign land or embarking on a journey, one would say '*kabahakatino wite Wolio*' (BM: the blessings of the Wolio earth, BW: *kabarakatina tana Wolio*). Some travellers would bring a small portion of soil from Buton with them on journeys. Each village also has its own sacred sites, places of potency, and travellers sometimes take rocks or earth from these local sites as talismans of potency. These talismans have been used for safety not only during travel but also in combat, such as in Ambon during the 1999 riots.[272] Such items could also provide good fortune in the garden or at sea.

The power of the land is associated with spirits who are not acknowledged by modernist Muslims, however, and they consider these appeals to be *syirik* (idolatrous). Modernist Muslims in Boneoge argue that prayers should be oriented towards God, not towards territorial spirits. This shift goes further than just the form of prayers; it represents a fundamentally different way of looking at the world, from one where power is embedded in the land (and thus land plays a vital role in the life of the community) to one where power resides with God (and land has merely instrumental value). This modernist view is now the dominant one in Boneoge.

Traditionalists for whom the power of the land remains vital have found that they have had to alter the form of their entreaties in order that they are not censured by the modernist majority. One traditionalist informant explained:

> When we come to a new area, or when we are saying batata, we often say 'blessings of the land of Wolio'. When we want protection, we say 'hopefully it will keep me safe during my journey'. Now we add 'God' to this kind of saying.

The phrase 'now we add God' seems to suggest that some traditionalists do no more than add the word 'God' at the end of their entreaties to the spirits, a superficial accommodation tacked on to a persistent belief. While the modernists desire that the entreaties are actually delivered only to God and not to spirits,

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[272] I was told that during the Ambon riots of 1999-2000 some Butonese combatants returned to Buton in order to get pieces of earth from Wolio, taking them back to Ambon in order to benefit from their protection. An informant from the village of Waleale also told me how people took rocks from their sacred site to Papua during the struggle to take Papua from the Dutch in the 1960s.

some traditionalists are attempting to resist this pressure, even if they cannot do it openly.

The overall direction of the shift, however, is clearly towards the modernists' camp. Notions of the mystical power of the land, and entreaties to it for protection, are on the decline in Boneoge. Some traditionalists strongly retain their beliefs, but the younger generation of Boneoge is ever less attached to ideas related to the power of the land.[273]

7.3.2 From Buton to Mecca

With the decline of the Wolio Sultanate and the rise of the Indonesian nation, political authority, as well as certain religious functions, has passed to Jakarta. With the rise of modernist Islam, which denies a special role to the Sultan as the 'perfect man', and the end of the Sultanate as a political entity, religious authority which used to reside with the Wolio Sultanate has largely passed to Mecca as the centre of global Islam. Modernists acknowledge Mecca as the source of the proper standards of Islamic observance (through the Qur'an and Muhammad), while traditionalists in Boneoge tend to hold onto belief in the supremacy of Wolio and Buton. The modernist view is ever more dominant.

A number of myths and legends describing the relationship between Mecca and Buton can be seen as attempts to make sense of their relative power and authority within the new context of modernist Islam. While almost all villagers display abundant pride in Buton, the dominant view is now that of the modernists: that Wolio was just one Sultanate among many, with no special significance in the world of Islam or in terms of mystical power on a world scale. Stories describing Buton's superiority over Mecca continue to be told by traditionalists, but not in large public arenas, where the majority of villagers, including the village elite, would disapprove. Here I detail some of these traditionalist views; the kinds of views which are replacing them conform to widely shared modernist views and thus require less attention here.

Traditionalists tell a number of stories which serve to establish the powerful position of Buton specifically with regard to Mecca. One example relates to

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[273] The implications of this disenchantment of the land for the status system are discussed further in Chapter 8.

reinterpretations of the origin myth of the island of Buton within the framework of Islam. It is said that the island of Buton emerged from the sea, and that the first bit to emerge was a particular rock which lies within the Wolio *keraton* in the town of Baubau. This rock is referred to in the Wolio language as *burasatongka awalina*, which means (roughly) 'arising from a patch of foam'. Right beside this rock now lies the tomb of Murhum, the first Sultan of Wolio, who is said to have converted to Islam in 1540. This rock (as well as the grave) is believed to be particularly potent; people come to take water from nooks in the rock before starting a business or other undertaking. In Boneoge, a traditionalist farmer told me a version of this myth which seemed to emphasise that Buton has significant Islamic power (although not superior to that of Mecca).

> The Prophet Muhammad said 'when I die, go and look there [in Southeast Asia], the land will rise up'. The first Wali,[274] Abdul Gafur, came to Buton to check, but he saw only coral. The second one came, but he saw only sand. When the third came, he saw that there were already trees, and people. He saw that there were *jubah*[275] hanging on the clotheslines, which meant that the people were Muslim, and they had arrived before him.[276]

That the Prophet, at the centre of Islam, foretells the rising of Buton shows the importance of Buton within Islam. When the third emissary arrives in Buton and finds that other Muslims have arrived before him, the sense is that Buton did not need Mecca in order to learn about Islam.

The pilgrimage signifies that Mecca is the centre of Islamic power and knowledge, and the increasing number of Boneoge pilgrims reinforces the position of Mecca as superior to Wolio as a centre of power. Some traditionalists, though, have an alternate way of looking at the pilgrimage, espousing the view that the pilgrimage to Mecca is not necessary, since Buton already possesses sufficient Islamic knowledge and power. Modernists universally criticise and reject this view, and indeed those who hold it will rarely discuss it in public, knowing that their belief goes against the current dominant discourse. A

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[274] A *wali* is an Islamic saint.

[275] A *jubah* is a kind of robe worn in Arabia and associated with Islam.

[276] The story went on to describe the relative status of the island of Muna: 'The island of Muna arose at the same time...they are siblings. Muna is the elder sibling, because it is the male...Buton is the female. But because of its power, Buton has become the elder.' Notions of relative status depend on both precedence and gender here.

Boneoge farmer told me that Butonese people who attempt to register for the *hajj* to Mecca are turned down, with these words: 'you are from Buton, why would you want to go to Mecca?'[277] Another informant told me, 'people go to Saudi Arabia to get *ilmu*...but there is much *ilmu* here in Buton'. This again asserts the high status of Buton with respect to Mecca, and describes what is being sought as '*ilmu*', which blurs the distinction between pre-Islamic mystical power and modernist Islamic knowledge (knowledge of the Qur'an, experience of the holy sites in Mecca).[278]

Schoorl also describes ideas about the Islamic power of Buton, and suggests that Sufist ideas may have tolerated or preserved the notion of the mystical power and uniqueness of Buton:

> Possibly because of sufistic influence, there is the idea that the centre of the Wolio Sultanate is complete in terms of religion. When some years ago someone from the centre was going to go to Mecca, Wolio elders asked him, what are you looking for there, since everything that is there can be obtained here at the centre (2003: 152 my translation).

Another attempt to augment the status of Buton within an Islamic world view is the notion that the name Buton comes from the Arabic word '*butuuni*' instead of from the Indonesian word *butun* meaning a kind of tree (see Chapter 2). It is even claimed that the name '*butuuni*' was mentioned in the Qur'an (Yunus 1995: 12), and refers to the fact that Buton is pregnant with secret knowledge (see Chapter 8). Claims that Buton's origin was linked to Arabia and in fact directly to the Qur'an, the primary source of Islamic knowledge, can be seen as efforts to increase the legitimacy of Buton with respect to the Islamic worldview.

A book which I saw in Boneoge provides another example of negotiating the power of Buton vis-à-vis Mecca, this time dressed up as a form of secular knowledge. The book presented itself as a history of Buton and Muna, and included a series of claims which emphasised the central role of Buton in Islam: that Buton and Muna together with Mecca and Medina were the four sacred

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[277] Indonesians wanting to undertake the *hajj* must register with the government, since strict quotas (set by Saudi Arabia) apply on how many may go each year.

[278] The connecting of one's local area to the centre of Islamic power is not unique to Buton; Bartels described how people in Ambon would make a pilgrimage to 'Mecca', but perform it by going to a local sacred site in the mountains; he also found the belief that Muhammad had brought Islam to the region personally (2003: 138).

places of Islam, that Wakaakaa (the first ruler of the pre-Islamic Kingdom of Buton) was from actually Arabia, and so on. The claims were stated but not substantiated, and the owner of the book treated it more as a potent talisman of power than as a source of historical knowledge.[279] In fact it is unlikely that he had studied the contents well, since he was blind and illiterate, but he felt that possessing the book lent him power. Modernists, on the other hand, dismissed the book's claims as scandalous and in contradiction with Islam.

A final example relates to a myth I heard in Boneoge describing a mystical contest between representatives of Buton and Mecca, to determine who would have to acknowledge the superiority of the other. The Butonese man establishes his superiority at every step:

> An Arabian man came to Buton, wanting to test the *ilmu* [mystical power] of Butonese people, to see if they are as powerful as he had heard while in Arabia. He met a Butonese man, on a Friday. They came to a well to wash before praying. The Butonese man said 'you go first, since you have come from far away'. The Arabian struck the ground, and the water rose up out of the well, so that he could wash. Then he said 'now you' to the Butonese. The Butonese levitated up and into the well, hovering above the water as he washed. The Arabian then said, 'we will be late to the mosque'. The Butonese responded 'you go ahead, I will be right behind you'. The Arabian went to the mosque, and joined the 4th *syaf* [the fourth row of people praying, from the front]. He saw the Butonese man in the first row directly behind the Imam [indicating that he had arrived long before]. The Arabian capitulated, saying 'I have to acknowledge [*akui*] the *ilmu* of the Butonese'.

This myth functions to demonstrate the superiority of Buton over Arabia in terms of Islamic *ilmu* – knowledge and mystical power. The rivals are both Muslim, and the Butonese man is shown to be more powerful than the Arabian. This story serves to argue against the notion that Buton, after becoming Muslim, should acknowledge the superiority of Arabia as the source of Islam. Buton is shown here to be more Muslim than Mecca. This story can be seen as a metaphor for a religious transformations taking place within society (Hefner 1987: 63), in this case representing resistance against such a transformation. This kind of story

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[279] In another example of new types of power being interpreted in terms of old ones, Aragon found that in Central Sulawesi bibles were 'physical valuables akin to other types of heirlooms' (2000: 181). See also Errington (1989: 231) for a similar phenomenon. The talismanic use of the Qur'an is widespread in the Muslim world (Bowen 1993: 98).

is told by traditionalists, whereas modernists dismiss such stories as myths (rather than telling equivalent ones where Arabia wins).

Stories about the greatness of Buton represent resistance by the traditionalists against the dominant views of the modernists, who discount such stories and affirm the superior position of Mecca under Islam. The weakness of the traditionalist view, seen from the fact that it is non-existent in public discourse, signals the loss of status of the ideology which propped up the Sultanate, the traditional hierarchies under its control, the system of nobility which structured the Sultanate, and the *adat* rituals and spirit beliefs which fitted into the worldview of the Sultanate.

7.3.3 From Error to sin

Illnesses or misfortune inflicted by spirits punishes not sin but 'errors'.[280] With the rise of modernist Islam, there has been a shift towards a focus on sin rather than error. Under modernist versions of Islam, the set of sins is usually fairly clear, but errors against spirits can include things like neglecting to 'feed' them, or committing acts which are acceptable in some places but unacceptable when in the territory of particular spirits. Punishment for sin tends to be personal, in the form of an unpleasant afterlife, while punishment for errors often affects the community as a whole, and happen now, in this life.

Beliefs in both error and sin can act to safeguard the morality of the community, but the concept of sin empowers mosque officials or those with knowledge of the tenets of modernist Islam (who can advise regarding sin), whereas the concept of error empowers ritual specialists who can cleanse the village or the individual who committed the error. Religious change in Boneoge involves a transition from the concept of error to that of sin, which means that the status of ritual specialists has fallen while the status of mosque officials and other knowledgeable modernists has risen.

Bad fortune was often explained as punishment for errors committed against spirits, for instance neglecting to feed them. These sorts of punishments may

[280] The term for committing such errors in *bahasa* Muna is *noalati* (he/she made a mistake), and in Indonesian *dia ada kesalahan* (he/she made a mistake, committed an error), in contrast to the Indonesian '*dia berdosa*' (he sinned).

affect the individual only, or may affect his family or even the community at large. These community-based punishments for individually-committed errors can also serve to enforce morality between humans. One sailor told me how a journey of his had been interrupted when someone had angered the sea spirits:

> We left Ambon for Sorong, but near Seram we stopped as there was no wind. We waited for 12 days, and eventually our supplies were gone. The captain questioned the crew, and at last we found the problem. It turns out that a crew member had raped a girl while in Ambon. This crew member was [ritually] bathed, and the wind picked up immediately. In two days we were in Sorong.

A 'sin' would not be removed by such a ritual bathing, but an 'error' can be. The bathing constitutes not a punishment but a cleansing of the unclean state in which the perpetrator had placed himself by committing the error. The punishment (lack of wind) has already been suffered by the whole crew.

In contrast, the modernist Muslim ideology of sin focuses attention on individual responsibility; modernist Muslims (which Ellen calls 'fundamentalist reformists') in Indonesia have:

> a more developed notion of 'individual responsibility', and a tendency to rely upon the self and its relation to God rather than upon a cycle of rites. This is linked to a belief that individual choices and actions lead to success or failure in life and salvation or damnation in the hereafter (Peacock cited in Ellen 1983: 62).

While some Boneoge people remain concerned about committing errors against spirits, most are more focused on the Islamic economy of merit: avoiding sin (*dosa*) and accumulating *pahala* (spiritual merit). *Pahala* can be accumulated, for instance, by carrying out Islamic rituals, or by carrying out acts which are not mandatory but desirable. Boneoge modernists are eager to avoid sin and to accumulate as much *pahala* as they can.[281] Various examples provide

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[281] '*Pahala* is the opposite of *dosa*', one man explained to me, indicating that sins build up and are held against you, while *pahala* build up and are held in your favour. He went on to explain that deeds which are considered *sunat* (desirable but not mandatory) outside of fasting month are worth more *pahala* when carried out during fasting month; they are worth the same as *wajib* (mandatory) deeds normally are, or more. Another informant told me that the *taraweh* (evening) prayer during the fasting month, for instance, is worth either 700 or 7000 times a regular prayer – he could not remember exactly. While *pahala* calculations may not be precise, people do think about them.

evidence that people do act based on expectations of receiving particular amounts of *pahala* in reward.[282]

It should be noted that ideological transitions are rarely immediate or uniform; many Boneoge people retain beliefs related to errors against spirits, and understand notions of sin using elements of the ideology of errors. Further complicating things, Boneoge people at times use the word '*dosa*' (sin) when referring to the concept of 'error'.[283]

To the extent that people are oriented towards avoiding errors towards spirits, and placating spirits when they are angry, they need ritual specialists who have knowledge and skills relating to the spirits. These specialists thus acquire high status in society. With the shift in Boneoge away from errors and towards sin, the status of ritual specialists, and in fact all people who possess knowledge of the spirits, has declined.

7.4 Status: Marginalising the Religion of the Farmers

The dispute about whether the contentious rituals should be held or not was rarely pursued in open debate or argument during the time I lived in the village (2001-2003). Rather, it was well known that the modernists considered rituals involving offerings for spirits to be *syirik* or *haram*, and not allowed under Islam. Since the elite of the village were almost all modernists, traditionalists, who were either not against the rituals or actively desired to hold them, were a silent and marginalised minority. However, they felt that their safety and prosperity would

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[282] I give two examples of the allure of *pahala* here. During the early days of the recent modernist reform in Boneoge, in the 1960s, village leaders asked villagers to donate the stones from the walls surrounding their house plots so they could build a concrete mosque to replace the existing wooden one. In order to entice them, it was pointed out that they would receive *pahala* for their generosity. The result was that almost all of these walls were taken apart. Incidentally, this led to a number of land disputes following the return of the Ambon refugees in 1999, when demand for land was high but land boundaries were no longer clear due to the absence of the stone walls.

More recently, a neighbour of mine told me how he suffered a motorcycle accident one afternoon because he was rushing to make it back to Boneoge for the *maghrib* prayer (*maghrib* is the time around dusk, the transition from daylight to dark, and is said to be a particularly likely time for accidents to happen). It is worth more *pahala*, he explained, if you pray in a large group as opposed to praying alone at home. He was so rushed that he almost took off on his motorcycle before his wife had gotten on, and then further down the road, they had their accident.

[283] This misleading use of language regarding sins and errors has been found elsewhere also. Aragon found that the Uma term '*sala*', in the Christian Kaili region of Central Sulawesi, refers to a 'social error or ritual misstep rather than the European idea of personal moral guilt' (2000: 186), but that such transgressions were often translated into the Indonesian word *dosa*, meaning sin (ibid: 187).

be endangered if they discontinued all such rituals, and so, as indicated in the quote at the beginning of the chapter, they sometimes held abridged versions of the rituals, in secret.

This section explores how modernists and traditionalists in Boneoge discuss the contentious rituals. While traditionalists present the dispute as concerning the proper relationship between *adat* and Islam, modernists consider stopping the rituals as a part of progress beyond an unenlightened past. Now, in fact, not just the rituals but farming itself is considered part of an unenlightened past; this argument is developed through a consideration of the status of the community of Kampung Baru.

7.4.1 Traditionalist views

In this section I discuss some of the ways traditionalists talk about these contentious rituals. These views tend not to be voiced directly to modernist Muslims, but nevertheless express resistance to the dominant modernist paradigm. In the quote given at the beginning of this chapter, a traditionalist farmer defends the contentious rituals by arguing that they are not in contradiction with Islam, and that they are part of Boneoge *adat*, where *adat* is separate and complementary to *agama* (meaning, in this case, Islam). Most traditionalists defend the contentious rituals with similar appeals to the split between *adat* and Islam; that is, the contentious rituals are not a part of Islam, but they are a part of *adat*, and *adat* is necessary for life.

In Boneoge the term '*adat*' refers to local customs and practices, the old ways of doing things, and especially to rituals which are clearly not of Islamic origin. It can also refer to something like 'good manners', or to bride price payments (*mahar*).[284] Traditionalists are more likely to use the term to mean customs and rituals than modernists, who tend to use it to refer to bride price payments and general good manners. That is, modernists stress a usage of the term '*adat*' which does not include the contentious rituals; modernists agree that *adat* is

[284] *Adat* can mean 'good manners' such as in the following examples: 'we have different *adat* to Muna people; when they are leaving a group they shake the hands of everyone present', or, 'that child doesn't know *adat*' (meaning 'that child is impolite'). *Adat* can mean 'bride price' such as in the sentence: 'how much was the *adat* for that wedding?'

important, but they do not consider the contentious rituals to be *adat* (or at least not the kind of *adat* which should be recognised and valued).[285]

Traditionalists express the separate but complementary nature of *adat* and *agama* in various ways.[286] One used a house metaphor, explaining to me that: '*adat* is the foundation, *agama* is the walls'. This portrays *adat* and *agama* as complementary and mutually dependent, with *adat* having the more essential role (as the foundation of the house without which the walls could not stand).[287] A similar view is expressed in the Butonese saying, 'people have their *agama*, the village has its *adat*' (PPPKD 1978b: 155). Here both *adat* and *agama* are portrayed as necessary, but *agama* is for individuals while *adat* is for the village as a whole. This echoes the dynamic described in the previous section, where modernists are more focused on individual 'sins' while traditionalists are focused on communal 'errors'.[288]

There are several important precedents for this notion of complementarity between *adat* and Islam. One is found in the traditional administrative structure of villages in Buton (which was described in Chapter 4), where there were two parallel hierarchies, one governing *agama* and one governing *adat*. A second example, which persists today, is found in weddings. Boneoge weddings have two important parts: the *akad nikah* (the Islamic wedding ceremony), and the settling of the bride price (*mahar*, *maskawin*, BW: *popolo*). The latter involves family gatherings to negotiate the amount and form of payments to be made, and then the formal delivery of what has been agreed upon. The wedding ceremony is under the jurisdiction of *agama*, while the bride price arrangements are under

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[285] A local perspective on the concept of *adat* is found in the Muna language dictionary, which defines *adhati* as: 1. proper behaviour, traditional customs, customary law; 2. total dowry (van den Berg 1996).

[286] As noted in Chapter 1, there are a number of reasons why it is problematic to attempt to separate religious practices into categories of '*adat*' and Islam. These concepts do not have unambiguous meanings, and have interpenetrated each other. Beliefs about *adat* vary from village to village, and even within Boneoge. Attempts to portray a static past in contrast to a contemporary maelstrom of change, or alternatively the wholesale replacement of previous traditions by Islam, tend to essentialise these concepts. In this section, my purpose is to explain how local people use these concepts to defend their beliefs.

[287] Laujé people (Central Sulawesi) use a tree metaphor where *adat* is the roots and Islam is the branches (Nourse 1999: 156), showing a similar precedence for *adat* as roots grow before branches.

[288] Conceptions of the relationship between *adat* and Islam are also often encoded in myth and ritual. Nourse describes how the Laujé *Momasoro* rite carries a host of (opposed) messages about whether *adat* or Islam is superior or the 'older sibling' (1999: 182-3).

the jurisdiction of *adat* (the bride price can even be explicitly referred to as the '*adat*'), and all Boneoge people (including modernists) only consider the wedding official once both parts are concluded satisfactorily.[289]

Another way in which traditionalists express the complementarity of *adat* and *agama* is in terms of *adat* ensuring our safety in this world and *agama* ensuring our safety in the afterlife. As one traditionalist farmer put it: 'actually, the two [Islam and *adat*] are the same – the mosque is for the afterlife, but what about *this* world?' This implies that just as Muslim prayers can assure a comfortable afterlife, rituals to propitiate spirits are necessary in order to enjoy good health, safety, and prosperous harvests during one's life. In a similar vein, one traditionalist told me: 'some people are against the rituals, they say they are *haram* [forbidden]...but they are our life'. He was bitter that the modernists had managed to portray the rituals as improper, since this was jeopardising his health and prosperity. According to this view, the modernists are disregarding important aspects of village *adat*, and by disrespecting the territorial spirits, risking serious consequences to health and livelihood.

In order to advance their view of the efficacy (and therefore the necessity) of respecting territorial spirits, traditionalists also told stories of how modernists had suffered consequences due to neglecting the spirits. One such story involved a view of why a recent house fire had occurred. La Tama's house had burned to the ground while he was at the *maghrib* prayer at the mosque. My traditionalist informant explained why this had happened:

> La Tama cleared a garden plot near his house, but he angered the *miendo wite* because he did not ask their permission. The *miendo wite* came to demand their due, but La Tama would not give them anything, saying that he did not want to know anything about ghosts (*setan*).

La Tama's disrespect of the spirits is highlighted when he refers to them not by the Muna term '*miendo wite*' but by the Arabic term '*setan*', implying that they

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[289] A similar example of complementary realms is found in local approaches to illness. Some sicknesses are considered 'normal' sicknesses which should be cured by modern medicine or hospitals. Other sickness are caused by neglecting the ancestors, angering guardian spirits, breaking taboos, becoming the target of sorcery ('black magic'), or being startled. For these types of illness, a *bhisa* (village healer) must be consulted. The nature of the illness determines whether people will consult village healers or the government medical system, and both refer patients to the other when the illness falls outside of their jurisdiction.

are evil and not something to be respected. This story shows that La Tama's neglect of the spirits was misguided, and resulted in the house fire.

Another story told by traditionalists attests to the consequences of disrespecting the land. While selling land within the village was said to have been rare before 1999, since the return of the refugees from Ambon there has been increased demand for good house plots within the village, and some have been bought and sold. A traditionalist criticised this practice, saying that it was acceptable to make money from using land, but not from selling it:

> Two people sold their land near the *Oe Bhalano* water spring, but they both died shortly afterwards. We come from the land and return to the land, so you are not allowed to eat from the sale of land...or you will die.

Buying and selling land implies a more secular relationship towards the land compared to that of the traditionalists, who work hard to ensure a harmonious relationship with the spirit guardians of any particular plot of land which they use. In this traditionalist's view, selling the land is so disrespectful to the guardian spirits that death will result. This story can be taken as a criticism of the commoditisation of land and the move away from agriculture in Boneoge, where certain forms of capitalist transactions are considered immoral by the traditionalists (see Taussig 1980).

These and similar stories come as signs that the traditionalists resent the dominance of the modernist view, and feel that it is dangerous to disrespect the land and the spirits which guard it. Their views remain quiet resistance, however, since they are not presented in the public sphere, especially when high status modernists are present.

7.4.2 Modernist views

In contrast to traditionalists, modernists do not tend to discuss the dispute over the banned rituals in terms of *adat* and Islam. Rather, they portray the dispute as being between proper Islam and an Islam mixed with outdated *syirik* practices which are leftovers from Buton's pre-Islamic history. Boneoge modernists see these practices as indicative of 'weak' Islam, an Islam mixed with Hindu or animist elements, which they have now progressed beyond. They often describe the traditionalist beliefs as belonging to the past, and this marks traditionalists as

backward, which lowers their status. It is important to note that Boneoge modernists do not argue that *adat* is harmful or negative; in fact they affirm the value of *adat*, but define *adat* so as to exclude the contentious rituals.

Modernists admit that the previous generation all participated in the contentious agricultural and protection rituals, but say that now most Boneoge people have left behind these practices to embrace 'proper' Islam. In the following quote, a modernist, La Ode Sudi, explains the shift from these old practices – in particular the use of the *sahiga* – to Muslim prayers:

> *Sahiga* are not allowed to be used now, but before the 1950s everyone used them. People used to pray using Boneoge language, mentioning every spirit [*djin*]...there was an incense burner with the *sahiga*.[290] In Kampung Baru people might still use *sahiga* – they probably keep them in the attic so that people don't see them – and they still use lots of offerings too. In the past, for garden rituals, you would leave offerings in the corners, to ask permission from the guardian spirits. Now we pray using Muslim prayers...but some people still use offerings.

Here *sahiga* and offerings are cast as the past, which Kampung Baru people are still holding on to. Note that he refers to territorial spirits not as '*miendo wite*' but using the Arabic '*djin*', which makes his modernist position clear. La Ode Sudi portrays Islamic prayers as having replaced offerings and local language prayers (mantra, or *batata*). To traditionalists, these are not competing types of prayers, but two different things, for different occasions and purposes: Muslim prayers (*doa*) for God and the afterlife, *batata* for the spirits in *this* world. By assuming there is only one type of prayer, this modernist portrays *batata* as the old, incorrect, type, and 'Muslim prayers' as the new, correct, type.[291]

Modernists explain this recent past of *syirik* rituals by saying that Islam in Boneoge used to be 'superficial' or 'weak'. Modernists consider the contentious rituals to be animist or Hindu leftovers which have persisted because the people were ignorant of proper Islam until recently. Modernists refer to villages in

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[290] He mentions the incense probably because it is widely seen as a sign of Hindu or pre-Islamic ceremonies in many parts of Indonesia.

[291] La Ode Sudi's own father, he told me, 'prayed to the corners' (to be safe from spirits). La Ode Sudi is of the *kaomu* (noble) rank; even more notably, before Indonesian independence his father had been a *lakina* – the highest local office under the Wolio Sultanate, the head of a region similar in size to a present-day sub-district. These characteristics did not make him adhere to traditionalist ideas though; he was a strict modernist.

Buton which continue to hold such rituals as having weak Islam, in contrast with Boneoge which has 'strong Islam' because the rituals are no longer held (openly).

Another way in which Boneoge modernists portray the rituals as a dying relic of times past is to describe them as 'the things old people do'. This is a way of marginalising the rituals and those who hold them, by suggesting that only the elderly (i.e. those who reject modernity and progress) care about them. This recent past of weak Islam does cause some embarrassment though. When I asked why certain rituals had been discontinued, some modernists avoided mentioning their *syirik* nature, instead giving explanations like 'they were too much trouble to organise'. Upon further questioning, however, it would be admitted that the rituals had to be discontinued because they were *syirik*.

Modernists often refer to the contentious rituals as 'Hindu' or 'animist' leftovers of an unenlightened past. Butonese people understand that Hinduism held sway in Buton before Islam arrived. In Boneoge, 'Hindu' has associations with spirits, the past, local traditions, and farming, whereas Islam, in contrast, stands for monotheism, modernity, a wider regional and/or national identity, and a departure from farming. As discussed in Chapter 1, labels of 'Hindu' or 'animist' serve to marginalise the contentious rituals (and the people who approve of them) by demarcating them as non-Islamic. Promoting symbolic hegemony requires dismissing the authenticity of alternate beliefs and practices, and terms such as 'animist' and 'Hindu' contribute to that project. Traditionalists remain proudly Muslim and resent being labelled Hindu or animist. However, this delegitimisation of traditionalist beliefs has been largely successful in Boneoge.[292]

7.4.3 Marginalising Kampung Baru

With the rise of modernist Islam, traditionalists in Boneoge are seen in a negative light. Most farmers are traditionalist. They consider it essential to respect territorial spirits in order to enjoy good health and good harvests. Farmers,

[292] Note that my goal is not to clarify what is and is not proper Islam. In any case academic analysis which uncritically affirms locals' characterisations of local practices as pre-Islamic or 'Hindu' risks inadvertently supporting the delegitimisation of one side or another in a religious dispute. Geertz, for example, was accused of supporting the views of his modernist informants when he branded some Sufist practices in Java as Hindu-Buddhist (Hefner 1997).

though, have not managed to achieve *sukses*. Due to their association with *syirik* beliefs, the past, and a lack of *sukses*, farmers in Boneoge now have extremely low status in the village. The low status of farming beliefs and farmers also adheres to the entire community of Kampung Baru, which continues to be associated with farming even though many of its residents are no longer farmers. This section discusses the marginality of Kampung Baru with respect to the rest of Boneoge (or 'Boneoge proper').

As explained in Chapter 2, Kampung Baru is a community of about 500 people on the outskirts of Boneoge (administratively it is a part of Boneoge), which was established in 1969 when the people of Lawonolita, a farming community on the hill above Boneoge, were induced to move down to Boneoge and were allotted land adjoining the south side of the village. The marginality of Kampung Baru is based on its association with farming, and is also related to shifts in the basis of status away from mystical knowledge and traditional authority, and towards wealth, education, and modernist Islam. It is also related to the generally low status occupations of its inhabitants (primarily farming, labouring and simple fishing), poverty, and low education levels, and historical differences between Kampung Baru and Boneoge proper, including the issue of precedence.

Kampung Baru is much less wealthy than Boneoge proper. Concrete houses, the sign of *sukses* described in Chapter 5, are few and far between in Kampung Baru. Instead most houses are simple wooden stilt houses – the housing used by Boneoge people of limited means for generations.[293] Kampung Baru houses tend to use a traditional hearth (BM: *abu tungku*) rather than a kerosene cooking stove, which is another sign of poverty, since people who can afford it prefer purchasing kerosene to collecting firewood. The simple huts of Kampung Baru

[293] Stilt houses are of two main types. *Lambu tada* (BM) have a particular number and arrangement of house posts, often painted and ornately decorated plank walls, and usually roofs of corrugated iron. *Lambu kaki seribu* are also on stilts, but the stilts are a multitude of hand-cut trees, the walls are woven bamboo (BM: *daladah*) and they have roofs of sago fronds (*daun rumbia, BM: ato panasa*) instead of corrugated iron. *Lambu tada* were commonly built by those people on the coast who had sufficient money, while *lambu kaki seribu* were used by farmers living in the hills as well as those on the beach who could not afford *lambu tada*. Most of the houses in Kampung Baru are *lambu kaki seribu*.

thus stand for poverty and tradition in contrast to the concrete mansions of Boneoge proper, symbols of wealth and modernity.

In Kampung Baru in 2006, 38% of workers were farmers; 65% were either farmers, labourers or small scale fishers. This contrasts sharply with Boneoge proper where only 2% were farmers and the three occupations listed above account for only 20% of workers. The migration patterns of Kampung Baru people are also different from those of people from Boneoge proper; most Kampung Baru people migrated only to Ambon, and few became traders. Almost all of these are small scale traders who have not achieved any *sukses*. Only two Kampung Baru migrants had managed to make it to Hawaii by 2006, compared to 176 from Boneoge proper (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Differences between Kampung Baru and Boneoge proper[294]

REGION	Pop'n	Farmers	Hawaii Migrants	Concrete houses	#/% Haji	Nobles	High School Graduates
Boneoge proper	2790	2%	176 (22%)	27%	36 (1%)	151 (5%)	175 (6%)
Kampung Baru	527	38%	2 (1.5%)	8%	0	6 (1%)	4 (1%)

The social marginality of Kampung Baru can be seen from a number of measures, including their lack of nobles, *hajj* pilgrims,[295] and high school graduates. The community is also politically powerless in the village (due to lack of education, high birth, and economic success, factors which would allow them to play a role in village affairs), thus they receive few of the resources distributed through the village administration. Social interaction between Kampung Baru and Boneoge proper is infrequent (given their physical proximity), and what interaction does occur tends to be characterised by the hierarchical relation between them. Although there are kin relations which bridge Kampung Baru and Boneoge proper, these relations are often inactive, and marriages between the two communities are infrequent (see Chapter 5 on the phenomenon of 'kin-

[294] The data presented in this table come from surveys carried out as part of my research, as well as from village data collected by the Family Planning officer. For farmers and Hawaii migrants, the percentage given is relative to the total number of workers in that region. For concrete houses, it is the percentage of houses in that region which are concrete. For *haji*, nobles, and high school graduates, it is relative to the total population of that region, not just the adults.

[295] As discussed above, some traditionalists do not have as strong a desire to go on the *hajj* as do modernists. Nevertheless this difference still reflects wealth disparities and the resulting status differences between the communities.

distancing'). People from Boneoge proper often make disparaging remarks about those from Kampung Baru, describing them as poor, unsophisticated, traditional, dirty and uneducated.[296] Even the name of the community, Kampung Baru, reflects its low status. 'Kampung Baru' means 'new village/neighbourhood' – a reminder that its people are latecomers to Boneoge. Precedence is highly valued and tightly linked to status; the fact that the people of Boneoge proper have precedence at the current location raises their status.[297]

Overall, then, Kampung Baru has come to be associated with poverty, powerlessness, sedentarism, traditionalism, and *syirik* beliefs, in contrast to wealth, power, mobility, modernity, and modernist Islam.[298] The people who best encapsulate the latter characteristics are the successful traders of Boneoge proper, and it is their lifestyles to which most villagers aspire. This recalls the dichotomy between coastal Muslims (here represented by the modernists) and hilltop agriculturalists common in the ethnography of Indonesia (see Chapter 1), with an important, and instructive, difference.

That difference is that the two groups had a common origin as recent as a century ago. Many of the differences between them seem to stem from the 60-year gap between when the first group descended to the coast (around 1910) and when the second group did (around 1970, settling in Kampung Baru).[299] The first group had a 60-year head start in converting to a maritime lifestyle, and this led to completely different migration patterns for the two groups. With little access to lucrative migrations, people from Kampung Baru have remained farmers and

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[296] This brings to mind Rodenburg's observation, from her work in northern Sumatra, that farming stands for poverty and failure (1997: 169).

[297] Kampung Baru people sometimes refer to their community as 'Kapolangku', in an effort to assert some local identity for the place. The name Kapolangku is taken from *Oe Kapolangku*, a spiritually potent water spring and sacred site in the Kampung Baru area. It is a contentious choice for the new name, since it refers to precisely the type of spirit beliefs which are a source of dispute between traditionalists and modernists. Since many people of Boneoge proper seek to discredit these spirit beliefs, it is not surprising that they continue to use the name 'Kampung Baru'.

[298] The rural/urban distinction could be added to this list, since Kampung Baru people migrated to rural areas in Ambon whereas many from Boneoge proper migrated to Ambon city.

[299] It should be noted that the friction caused by differences in religious practices between the two groups can be attributed in part to the forced resettlement to which the Kampung Baru people were subjected. Often traditionalist and modernist groups choose to live in separate settlements (see Chauvel 1990: 165-8 for an example from Maluku). In Boneoge this resettlement and new proximity led to a confrontation about proper religious behaviour, which has been won by the modernists.

labourers, and have not been able to educate their children, build large concrete houses, migrate to Hawaii, become traders in Papua, or go on the *hajj*. These factors in turn help to maintain the low status of both Kampung Baru and farming. This demonstrates the importance of economic and political differences between hilltop and coastal groups, as argued by Li (2001), in contrast to views in which their differences are seen as largely cultural or ethnic.

The distinction between Kampung Baru and Boneoge proper is a powerful one for Boneoge people. For many, Kampung Baru represents a past characterised by agriculture, poverty, and spirit-based beliefs, in contrast with the future, characterised by trading, wealth, and modernist Islam. This dynamic seems central to the formation of Boneoge identity, as a progressive, modernising village, on the way to achieving *sukses*. Clearly such a dynamic is closely related to shifts in the status system, whereby noble blood, traditional leadership, and farming *adat* are less important, and wealth and modernist Islam are more important. In some ways, the transitions undergone by traders of Boneoge proper in the past century amount to a kind of conversion – an ideological and practical affiliation with a different way of life, one associated with capitalist accumulation, modernity, nationalism, and modernist Islam. Those who have *not* made this transition (best exemplified by traditionalist farmers of Kampung Baru) have come to be marginalised in terms of wealth, status, and power.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to explain religious change in Buton over the past generation by contextualising that change within economic, social, and political dynamics. It is worth emphasising that a number of these dynamics – the decline of farming, the erosion of the politico-religious ideology underpinning the Wolio Sultanate, and the migration patterns which enabled many to succeed as traders – converged in prioritising a shift towards modernist Islam in Boneoge, and that the mutually reinforcing nature of these influences has probably made the shift more rapid and complete.

As noted in Chapter 1, conflict between Islam and spirit beliefs in the region has been going on for centuries (Reid 1993: 158), and in many places the

prohibition of agricultural rituals has been a recent focus. Nevertheless, the form of religious change tends to be village-specific. The particular practices which become the focus of dispute, the ways in which the dispute is conducted, and the resulting trajectory of change all depend on the local power context and the agendas brought to bear by various parties, and these in turn depend on local political, economic and social dynamics. In Boneoge, the migrant trader livelihood has proved to be much more adaptable to political-economic developments in Indonesia over the past 60 years than has the farming livelihood, and religious change in Boneoge has focused on marginalising spirit beliefs relating to agriculture, which the village elite no longer need, while other practices which might be considered *syirik* have continued undisturbed. The result in Boneoge is that the status of farming-related *adat* knowledge, farming, and farmers has plunged.[300]

The Boneoge case demonstrates the important role that status can play in processes of religious change, and that religion can play in status change. High status people can guide the direction of religious change, both because other people might emulate them as well as because they might have the power to actively spread their beliefs. Conversely, exhibiting the dominant version of religious ideas facilitates the achievement of high status.

Religious conversion, even 'internal conversion' between variants of Islam, is not an instant process but instead takes place over time, through 'progressive negotiation' (Chambert-Loir and Reid 2002: xxiii) in which issues of power and political marginalisation are central (Aragon 2000: 321). Particular ideologies may be forced out of the public sphere and begin to weaken, even though beliefs are not immediately extinguished amongst individuals. The narrative of progress in which Kampung Baru, farming, and spirit beliefs are marginalised and cast as 'the past' in contrast to a hopeful future of trading, modernist Islam, and *sukses* is one of the ideological components of this conversion process. In this light the

[300] Post-1998 political decentralisation in Indonesia has been accompanied by a resurgence of pride in local history and *adat* in many parts of the country, with numerous Sultanates revived and discontinued rituals resurrected. Some villages near Boneoge have seen attempts to revive traditional harvest festivals or cleansings, but no such efforts have been made in Boneoge itself. Given the large scale abandonment of agriculture in Boneoge, and the domination of the modernists there, it is unlikely that such attempts would have any success.

debate about the contentious rituals is a reflection of a deeper, implicit debate about the direction of social change in Boneoge.

CHAPTER 8
THE FADING SPIRITS OF ELDERS

This chapter continues the discussion of Boneoge religion from the previous chapter, linking the changes described there to the declining social status of elders. The term 'elders' refers to people who are not only old but also are seen to possess mystical knowledge of particular types; both of these factors contribute to their status, but the importance of both factors for status in Boneoge has diminished. The position of elders in Boneoge social life has weakened due to a combination of economic, political and religious factors. The economic and political factors have largely been explained in previous chapters, and relate to new economic opportunities, a devaluing of land, the abolishment of the Sultanate, and the rise of democratic forms of village leadership.

The previous chapter described how the rise of modernist Islam along with economic changes in Boneoge has led to the discontinuation of agricultural rituals in which territorial spirits were propitiated. This chapter focuses on how this has also weakened the ideological underpinnings of respect for elders, by exploring the connected cosmologies of spirits and sacred sites, ancestors, and living elders.

8.1 Elders: Age and *Ilmu*

Age brings respect in Boneoge. Younger siblings respect elder siblings, children respect their parents, and people respect everyone of the generation(s) above them.[301] There is special respect as well for those villagers who are deemed to be 'elders'. The term 'elder' does not refer equally to everyone of old age in the village; as observed by Acciaioli with regard to the Bugis, there is more to being an elder than just age (2004: 172). In particular, elders are old people who exhibit exemplary behaviour – being restrained, wise, humble, and ethical – and

[301] Respect is especially due to one's relatives from a previous generation. For instance, one respects one's uncle, even if the uncle is younger than oneself.

are considered to possess particular kinds of knowledge, referred to as *ilmu* (which includes and goes beyond *adat* knowledge).

Such knowledge, and exemplary behaviour, is possessed to varying degrees by different people, and thus the degree to which an old person is considered an elder varies. Age is necessary but not sufficient to be an elder. A person 50 years old could be considered an elder if they demonstrated exemplary behaviour and sufficient knowledge, whereas another could be 70 but due to improper behaviour not be considered an elder. As explained in Chapter 4, the term *kamokula* has many meanings, and can refer to parents, old people, elders, leaders, or anyone of high status. Since the meaning is contextual and relational, for clarity I usually avoid it here, instead specifying the particular sense which is meant.

In the past, village leaders tended to be the highest status people in the village, and were not only elders (old and in possession of *adat* knowledge and other *ilmu*) but also descended from previous leaders and relatively wealthy. Their *ilmu* and knowledge of *adat* was important as it was used to protect the village from misfortune and to propitiate the spirits for good harvests. With the disentanglement of characteristics for high status, notions of mystical power still underpin the status of elders, but elders often lack wealth and village office, and their status is now far outshone by that of the big men of the village (who, notably, are not believed to possess mystical knowledge or abilities, but possess wealth and patronage networks).

Respect for elders has traditionally been extremely important in Boneoge life. To some extent, respect for elders is modelled on the relationship between children and parents, where children are expected to show a high degree of respect, obedience and submissiveness towards their parents throughout their lives. Relations with one's parents tend to be formal and characterised by overt verbal and physical deference. It is not proper to contradict one's parents, especially one's father, and in fact many people are not very comfortable in the presence of their parents because of this stiff formality. Parents retain economic control of the household since unmarried sons surrender all wages to their mother.

Treating one's parents well is a cornerstone of morality, and there is a strong desire to avoid bringing shame upon one's parents through one's actions. Obedience to parents is important and has even been described as a criterion for being an adult. An *adat* leader explaining the traditional circumcision ceremony (called *kangkilo*, and held for boys aged between eight and twelve as a rite of passage in the past[302]) commented that, '[circumcision] means that you can no longer disobey your parents'. Disobeying or disappointing one's parents can lead to mystical punishments. If a woman is having a long and difficult labour, it might be because she has sinned against her parents. Similarly, if someone suffers an accident or illness, it might be because they had disappointed their parents somehow.

All people older than oneself should be respected, more so for the very old, and even more so for elders who have *ilmu* as well as age. Respecting them means obeying their advice; obedience to the elders is referred to as 'knowing *adat*' or 'having *adat*', where *adat* here means something like 'the right way to act'. Respect for age is also evident in the term '*dituakan*'. When someone is referred to as '*dituakan*', this means that they are, literally, 'considered to be old', but in practice this means that they are highly respected. That is, status has traditionally been understood through the idiom of age.

There are several different types of knowledge or *ilmu* which elders possess, ranging from knowledge about the past and knowledge of how to hold rituals to knowledge about auspicious days and mystical happenings. Old people do not necessarily possess any of these types of knowledge, but those considered elders do possess at least some of them; young people, on the other hand, very rarely do.

Elders are repositories of knowledge about the past, which is useful for such things as land disputes, when elders can be summoned to establish which ancestor owned which piece of land. Knowledge about the holding of rituals is another type of 'elder knowledge'; although some such knowledge, such as that relating to propitiating agricultural spirits, is no longer in high demand,

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[302] The *kangkilo* (BM) was held during village festivals; it has been discontinued now, and circumcision is carried out by government health workers without ceremony.

knowledge about other rituals still is. One must summon an elder in order to hold a ceremony for the erection of a new house (BM: *fowanu lambu*), a prayer ceremony for the ancestors (BM: *posumanga*), or a betrothal with exchange of bride price. The fact that knowledge of rituals is seen to be exclusively the purview of elders was made clear to me on one occasion when a young man tried to explain a ceremony to me. The man was in his twenties, and seemed to understand the ritual well, but he was abruptly cut off by middle-aged men who said that they would find an elder to explain the ritual to me. The young man had overstepped his bounds by attempting to act as an authority on 'the knowledge of the elders'.

Elders understand *falia* (BM: taboos) and so can protect people by advising them on how to avoid breaking taboos and what to do if they do break them. They can calculate auspicious days for travelling or holding ceremonies. Their knowledge of the world together with their knowledge of mystical things means that their advice should be taken seriously. One popular story circulating in Boneoge in 1999 was that elders had known in advance that there would be some kind of problem in Ambon. Some elders from Boneoge went to Ambon to warn the Boneoge community there, but they did not listen. This story conveys the lesson that Boneoge people in Ambon suffered during the riots because they had not trusted the knowledge of the elders.

Elders can also interpret mysterious illnesses. For example, a one-month old child was sick with an unknown illness, so her parents took her to an elder knowledgeable about such things. The elder diagnosed the problem as a case of the baby not liking her own name. The baby had been named after an older sibling who had died, but the elder said the baby was rejecting this name. The elder instructed the parents to give the child a new name, that of her deceased grandmother, since this grandmother's spirit had entered the child.[303] Shortly thereafter the child recovered.

The power and status which derives from the knowledge possessed by elders is based in part on the secrecy with which it is veiled. The secrecy of elders' *ilmu* became evident to me initially when I was inquiring about *dhoa* (BM), a kind of

[303] Butonese beliefs in reincarnation have been documented by Schoorl (1985).

spell. My request for an example of a *dhoa* was met with the response that *dhoa* are secret and may not be revealed. As I found out over time, questions about the *ilmu* of the elders are often answered with 'that's a secret of the elders'.

The notion of secret *ilmu* is, in fact, closely associated with the Wolio Sultanate. One traditionalist informant underlined this by saying:

> People go to Saudi Arabia [on the pilgrimage] to get *ilmu*, but there's *ilmu* here in Buton! There are all kinds of *ilmu* here, but most is secret...*ilmu* here is not made apparent.

Butonese tend to hold a proud view of the greatness of Buton, but explain the fact that most Indonesians know nothing about Buton by referring to how elders tend to keep *ilmu* secret. At a seminar at the History Department of Dayanu Ikhsanuddin University in Baubau which I attended, the audience was told that the history of Buton is not well known because elders have kept it secret.

Many Butonese believe that the name 'Buton' reflects this secrecy; 'there are many secrets in Buton', people would tell me, 'that's what the name Buton means'. Local oral histories which I heard commonly recounted that the name 'Buton' comes from the Arabic *butuuni*, meaning 'stomach', 'pregnant', 'filled with contents' or 'pregnant with secrets', and that Buton was named by the Prophet Muhammad as a recognition of its strong but secret *ilmu*. According to Rudyansjah (1997: 51),

> ...this island [of Buton] is in the shape of a pregnant woman, and it is believed to have many secrets, which can only be known by those with *ilmu*. They believe that the word Buton comes from the word 'butuuni' (Arabic), meaning 'pregnant stomach'. This island is metaphorised as a pregnant woman with many secrets inside her stomach. [my translation from Indonesian]

Although it is unlikely that the name Buton comes from Arabic (as explained in Chapter 2), and myths about early connections with the Middle East are common in Muslim societies in eastern Indonesia, these stories serve to highlight the importance in Buton of secrecy and powerful *ilmu* possessed by elders.

In the Wolio Sultanate, knowledge tended to be conserved by those in power, rather than spread indiscriminately, and this was true of Islamic knowledge as well. Yunus describes how in Buton religious knowledge was conserved at the

centre, in contrast to Java where it was spread widely in order to seek support in resisting the colonial overlords (1995: 102-3). Schoorl has related the conservation of religious knowledge in Buton to the power struggle between the centre and the *kadié* (semi-autonomous villages within the Wolio Sultanate):[304]

> At the centre it was known that some knowledge, including Islamic knowledge, was deliberately not passed on to the villages, and which knowledge was passed on varied. This was in accordance with the policy of the centre, in order to prevent the commoners, papara, from obtaining the same knowledge, and by doing so, to prevent them from having the opportunity to be in control like the kaomu and walaka, and to prevent them from becoming united against the rulers (Schoorl 2003: 149; my translation from Indonesian).

Elders in Boneoge also tend to spread their *ilmu* sparingly. La Unse, a Boneoge elder skilled in the art of *balaba* (BM: martial arts, *silat*), which is believed to encompass both physical skills and mystical *ilmu*, explained to me that he does not teach just anyone, and when he does teach, he keeps some of the *ilmu* secret: 'elders have secrets, [we] don't teach everything...you have to select the students carefully, if we give *ilmu* to someone who is not appropriate they will bring shame upon us later.' La Unse explained that young men were inappropriate for *silat* instruction (i.e. for the teaching of *ilmu*) if they drank, gambled, or womanised, suggesting that the *ilmu* of elders should only be given to people with exemplary behaviour. When he does teach, he added, he selects a location where other people will not observe, thus controlling who receives the *ilmu*: 'we wait for other villagers to sleep, then we go to the clearing [at the far end of the village], or on the beach at low tide.' This style of knowledge transmission contrasts sharply with the open dissemination which characterises modern education, and, to some degree, modernist Islam, today.

Elders even acknowledged the role of secrecy in maintaining their power. On one occasion, an elder was telling me about the phases of the moon. Fishing expeditions are planned around the lunar cycle since the light of the full moon affects the ease of catching fish, and most Boneoge people are constantly aware of the moon's cycle. They also time endeavours such as weddings, journeys, or

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[304] Similarly, Nourse found that in Tinombo, Central Sulawesi, 'esoteric Islamic secrets were more or less the exclusive property of lowland elites' and not shared with highlanders; 'Islam was secret and for the privileged' (1999: 185).

new business activities around auspicious moments in the lunar calendar, but only particular elders know how to calculate which days are auspicious in any particular month. Before scheduling an important activity, it is normal to consult a knowledgeable elder about when to do it; besides respect, the elder will receive a small donation for this service. My informant was also a teacher, and, supporting my goal of understanding Boneoge culture, he was willing to show me a booklet which explained in detail the methods of calculating auspicious days. However, he cautioned: 'don't divulge the contents to anyone...it is secret *ilmu*, the capital [*modal*] of the elders'.

Secrecy about *ilmu* tends to be justified on the grounds of humility. When I first sought out La Unse at his house in order to ask about *balaba*, he denied his knowledge: 'No', he said, 'I am not a *balaba* teacher'. I stayed anyway, and after we spoke for a while he admitted that he was indeed a *balaba* teacher, but he said that one should not speak openly about one's *ilmu*. 'Don't display your *ilmu*', he said, 'because *ilmu* is like the rice plant, the more it is loaded, the more it stoops'.[305] This means that *ilmu* should make one humble rather than proud. In Boneoge people say, 'don't show what you can do, because others can do even more.' Those who display or boast of their *ilmu* are looked upon negatively.[306]

Both humility and secrecy often feature in legends about the *ilmu* of elders. The following myth, told to me by a Boneoge informant, demonstrates this theme:

> Buton used to have a close relationship with Ternate. Before the *keraton* [palace] mosque was built at Wolio, people from Buton would conduct their Friday prayers in the mosque in Ternate, using *wasala bhose* (BW) [a form of mystical transportation, whose name means 'one stroke of the paddle'; with one stroke of the paddle the boat would instantly appear in Ternate]. After the mosque was built, we didn't go to Ternate anymore, so the Imam [highest Muslim authority] of Ternate came with some followers to ask why Butonese people had stopped coming. They happened to bump into the Imam of Wolio, who was fishing in the Buton Straits, and he hid his identity. They had a

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[305] He gave the quote in Wolio: *Boli laolasakakea ilmumu itu ronamo ilmuna bae atamba ilmuna atundu.* It is, however, a common aphorism throughout Indonesia, and he gave an Indonesian version as well: *jangan terlalu dipamerkan ilmumu itu, karena ilmu seperti padi, makin berisi makin tunduk.*

[306] However, as described in Chapter 4, there is a tension between humility and boasting. People do tell stories about their own *ilmu*, but somewhat indirectly. La Unse did tell me some stories about the prowess of his own *balaba* teacher (see Chapter 4), but he made sure to point out that the teacher did not tell him the stories; rather, he heard them from other people.

> contest of power – causing Arabic symbols to appear in the water, and other things [all demonstrations of mystical abilities with an Islamic theme]. The Imam of Ternate was defeated. He thought, if a fisher is that powerful, imagine the Imam! So they went back to Ternate in defeat.

This myth is actually about Buton coming out from under the shadow of Ternate (see Schoorl 2003: 157; and Zuhdi 1999); Butonese people build their own mosque, and then defeat the Imam of Ternate when he comes to question their new autonomy.[307] Signifying independence from (and superior power to) Ternate, the Imam of Wolio defeats the Imam of Ternate in a contest of *ilmu*. The fact that the Imam of Wolio hid his identity makes the victory more thorough, since it convinces the Ternate Imam of the superiority of Butonese *ilmu*, given that someone he assumed to be a common fisherman beat him. The emphasis on humility and secrecy in Butonese *ilmu* is clear.

The notion that elders possess much *ilmu* which is secret can help to maintain their powerful reputation, and their high status, but only if the kind of *ilmu* which they possess is considered useful by other villagers. Economic and social changes over the past two generations have meant, however, that the knowledge possessed by elders is not in demand to the extent that it was when most Boneoge people were farming, the Sultanate and traditional village leadership structures were still in existence, and economic opportunities through migration were much more restricted. Boneoge people are said to 'still fear the elders', meaning that elders still command respect and politeness from society, but there are signs that the 'gerontocratic slant' (Rousseau 1998: 327) of Boneoge life is weakening.

Economic changes which have weakened the position of elders have been explained in earlier chapters. With the decline of agriculture in Boneoge, farming land is no longer in demand. In the past elders would assign access rights to the gardens surrounding the village, but now most lie unused. Instead, young people engage in various migrations, most of which are obtained not through village elders but through kin-based networks and especially through big men. Young men are especially interested in embarking on Hawaii migrations, which offer

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[307] As mentioned in Chapter 2, historians assert that Ternate converted Buton to Islam by force (Reid 1993: 166).

unprecedented wealth, and in order to so they do not need assistance from village elders. This has affected the degree of obedience which these newly independent migrants show to authority figures in the village, including elders. As one villager put it:

> Now there are many who have abilities [to achieve wealth and power]...they don't obey [elders] anymore....Now it's wealth and formal education which are strong, [where] it used to be informal *ilmu*: family, traditional knowledge, good behaviour.

Migration to urban centres has also led to an infusion of new values, including notions of modernity which have decreased the value of traditional knowledge in the eyes of many young people.[308] Formal education, much more available to today's children than to those of two generations ago, also brings access to a world of knowledge different to what elders possess. Modern medical services have come to Boneoge, including a government midwife and a local community health centre, and have reduced (but not removed) dependency on the healing knowledge of elders. The rise of modernist Islam has led to a decline in interest in other types of knowledge possessed by elders as well, such as that pertaining to propitiating territorial spirits.

Political changes have also affected the power and status of elders. Under the Indonesian government, the Wolio Sultanate has been abolished, and Boneoge is no longer formally led by a council of elders as it was under the Sultanate. Instead, a government-appointed *lurah* is the official leader of the village. Being an outsider, the *lurah* works in cooperation with an informal council of Boneoge leaders which I have referred to as the Executive. The spread of democratic practices since the fall of the authoritarian Suharto government has led to changes in authority in Boneoge, which have affected how leaders, including those in the Executive, operate. There has been, simultaneously, a weakening of the importance of age for leadership positions, and a reduction in the willingness of the masses to allow the leaders to decide everything. This has reduced the degree of control which elders had over village affairs.

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[308] Jones has also observed that as Indonesia 'modernises', there have been changes in the structure of the family, and in particular in power relations between generations (2002: 224-6).

The Executive consists of about ten men with a variety of leadership credentials including descent from past leaders and knowledge of Boneoge history and *adat*, as well as some more modern characteristics such as formal education. All members of the Executive are at least middle-aged, but not all of them could be considered elders. That is, age remains somewhat important for becoming a village leader, but other characteristics such as modern education can compensate for a lack of age. They make many of the political decisions in Boneoge life, in an oligarchic style where community participation is sometimes solicited but where respect for these leaders tends to discourage low status participation in village decision making processes.[309]

A particularly influential leadership position in Boneoge is the head of the LPM (*Lembaga Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, Village Empowerment Council), who used to be selected by the Executive. In 2002, it was decided that the head of the LPM would be democratically elected by the villagers as a whole, for the first time. A young man explained, 'because of *reformasi*, [leaders] have to be elected so that there aren't complaints. If leaders are selected by the elders, the young people will complain.'

This embracing of democratic norms stands at odds with how leadership operated in previous years, when the council of elders (under the Wolio Sultanate) or (more recently) the Executive was entrusted with the important decisions. In recent years, low status members of society, and in particular young people, have felt newly empowered by the spread of democracy in Indonesia, and more able to protest their exclusion from village decision making processes; as one said, 'if the little people speak at a meeting, we are ignored...rather than wasting our breath, we stay quiet'. Their experience migrating to urban areas seems to have also emboldened them in the belief that the elders do not always have the best answers. One young migrant told me:

> The elders have a narrow view. The village has been developed, with buildings and so on, but the outlook is just the same, it hasn't developed. The elders who migrated, maybe they only went as far as the wharf, and then came

[309] Important issues dealt with by the Executive include the distribution of government aid, land disputes, village regulations such as rules concerning alcohol consumption, *kerja bakti* (communal work efforts), and taxes on the use of village resources (for example, taxes on limestone mining and *bagan* fishing near the village).

> home. Younger migrants have spent time living in Ambon, Jakarta, and overseas.

The attitude of elders was characterised by another young migrant as hopelessly backward and out of touch: 'it's difficult with elders...they wanted to ban TV when it first came in!' Surely anybody who would ban TV should not be taken seriously. Another young migrant told me: 'elders here are still New Order...top-down', implying that rule by elders should be a thing of the past, just as the authoritarian New Order government was replaced by democracy in 1998. Note that the idea that age should not always be considered paramount is not new in Buton, as can be seen from an old Wolio saying quoted to me by an informant, '*akaporango teumuru*', which means roughly 'experience is better than age'. However, recent years have certainly seen increasingly direct and serious challenges to gerontocratic rule in Boneoge.

The results of the 2002 LPM election further emphasise the shift of authority away from elders. Due to the prevalence of migration there are often few youth in the village, but this election occurred in the aftermath of political disturbances in East Timor and Ambon, meaning that many young people were present. The big issue in the election, for young people, was dance parties. Young migrants, especially those who had spent time in Ambon, liked to hold dance parties late into the night, with loud music. The incumbent LPM leaders had reputations as strict (modernist) Muslims and frowned upon dance parties, believing that they encouraged drinking and inappropriate contact between boys and girls. One candidate for LPM head was a bit younger than the others, had spent over a decade living in Ambon, and had indicated that he would not forbid dance parties. He won the election by a landslide, receiving more votes than all of the other candidates combined.[310]

The consequence of all this is that elders no longer possess control over village politics or over access to wealth. Young people do not aspire to be *adat* leaders or village officials, but to be traders, embracing a version of high status exemplified by big men and not by elders, who are increasingly seen to stand for

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[310] The trumping of gerontocracy by democracy calls to mind the quote from Opu Pa'Bicara, Errington's noble informant, which I gave in Chapter 1.

outdated knowledge, attitudes, and livelihoods. These economic and political changes have led to a devaluing of age and *ilmu* within the status system in Boneoge.

8.2 *Sangia*: Sacred Sites and Powerful People

This section describes connections between the cosmology of sacred sites and beliefs related to respect for elders. What I refer to as sacred sites are those described by Boneoge people as '*sangia*', spiritually potent places. Beliefs and practices related to sacred sites have suffered a decline in recent years, as it is now considered inappropriate for good Muslims to entreat territorial spirits (*miendo wite*) through offerings, according to the dominant (i.e. modernist) discourse in Boneoge.

A key local concept relating to sacred sites, spirits, and spiritually potent people is the Muna language term '*sangia*', which can refer to spiritual beings and objects as well as people. According to the Muna dictionary, *sangia* has the following meanings: 1) honorific preceding names of royalty, deities and monsters; 2) mysterious or sacred objects (esp. trees, caves, etc.); 3) person with supernatural powers; and 4) respected elder (often used for elders in oral poetry). In Boneoge, *sangia* is used most often to refer to spiritually potent sacred sites such as particular caves and trees.[311] *Sangia* was also used to refer to important graves up in the Liwu (the old fort on the hill), and as a title of a king or other high ranking spiritually powerful person from the past.[312] *Sangia* can thus refer to high status humans (in the sense of 'respected elder') and their graves after

[311] When speaking *bahasa* Indonesia, informants referred to sacred sites as '*keramat*', or '*angker*'. *Angker* means 'eerie (esp. of haunted places)' (Echols and Shadily 1989). *Keramat* is more similar to the concept of *sangia*, but not identical. *Keramat* is often used to refer to sacred sites such as caves and graves, but rarely with respect to living people. The dictionary lists *keramat* as meaning: sacred, holy; possessing supernatural qualities; or shrine, sacred spot (Echols and Shadily 1989). The notion of 'respect' is not mentioned in this definition, although it is in the definition of *mengeramatkan* (to consider something *keramat*), which means to 'consider sacred' or to 'respect highly' (Echols and Shadily 1989).

[312] Similar words are common in the literature of the region, for instance '*Sangiang*' as the title of a rice deity in south Sulawesi (Ramstedt 2004: 207), '*sangia*' as a headhunting spirit among the Wana (Atkinson 1989: 48), '*Ida Sanghyang Widhi Wasa*' as the Balinese Hindu term for God (Ramstedt 2004: 11), and '*sangiang*' as supernatural beings who are 'like humans in some ways' among the Ngaju Dayak (Schiller 1997: 28).

they die, as well as spiritually potent sites like caves and water springs which are inhabited by spirits.[313]

The spiritual potency of *sangia* sites can be harmful to humans if they do not act sufficiently respectfully when near them. A disrespectful person will be struck by natural punishment; as one informant said, 'there is no mercy if we mess around'. In Boneoge respected elders are also nodes of spiritual potency, as are sacred sites, and offences against elders, just as offenses against sacred sites, may be punished by the forces of the universe. This suggests that *sangia* may be similar to the concept of potency known as *sumange'* (or similar terms) as described by a number of researchers in the Malay region (Endicott 1970; Errington 1989; Tsintjilonis 1999; Bigalke 2005: 113).

In Boneoge the term *sangia* more commonly refers to sacred sites, but the fact that it can also refer to people was pointed out to me by an elder who defined *sangia* as 'people who are *disegani*, who are the highest...people who are feared'. The phrase 'the highest' serves to emphasise the importance of social status in the concept of *sangia*. The passive form *disegani* comes from the root word *segan* (BM: *dhofomotei*), meaning (Echols and Shadily 1989): 1) keep in one's place, feel that person one is dealing with has a higher position; 2) be reluctant to do something others might consider above one or in regard to a person of higher status; and 3) unwilling to do something not quite proper. The full entry in the dictionary also mentions 'awe', 'respect', 'proper respect', and 'shyness'. Thus to *segan* someone means to acknowledge their superior position, by showing willingness to behave in a manner appropriate to that difference in status. One is 'shy' because one knows that it is improper to be too bold in one's movements around such people. In Chapter 4 I described the proper (verbal and non-verbal) behaviours for respecting someone of high status: being calm, quiet, and deferential. These behavioural prescriptions apply equally to sacred sites,

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[313] In what is perhaps a recent adaptation, *sangia* can also refer to God. In the Muna language, God is usually referred to as *Ompu*, but once during a gardening ceremony in a neighbouring village, someone used the phrase '*Wa Ompu La Sangia*'. The Muna-English Dictionary (Van den Berg 1996: 403) agrees with the term *Ompu* for God. Schoorl reported *Kawasana ompu* as the *bahasa Wolio* term for God (2003: 173). Schoorl also gives '*la ompu*' as 'the spirits that remain connected with the grave' (1985: 120), i.e. ancestor spirits. This suggests that *ompu* may be a general word for spirits which has been employed to refer to (the more recent development of) a monotheistic God – the highest-ranking 'spirit' of today.

and if one does not observe these guidelines, one can expect natural punishments in the form of illness and misfortune. Around sacred sites one must not be too 'bold', speak loudly, ask too many questions, speak 'wrongly', or be startled, surprised, or amazed.[314] This attitude of respect is also referred to as 'fear' (see next section).

Sites which are considered *sangia* in Boneoge are most often caves, graves, and trees. Boneoge has a number of water springs, most located in caves – and many of these are considered *sangia.* One such cave spring, called *Oe Kapolangku* (BM: Stairs Spring), is located in Kampung Baru.[315] An elderly woman who lived nearby escorted me on a visit to the spring, and explained that it is possible to request favours from the spring: 'people can ask for good fortune here...can ask to get pregnant, using *batata* [entreaties in the Muna language]'. The power is located in the water: 'the water can be used for healing...one says *batata*, then brings some water home and bathes the sick person....it can cure madness, skin diseases, leprosy...anything.' But because offerings and entreaties to spirits have fallen out of favour in Boneoge, many people in Boneoge proper have never been to *Oe Kapolangku.* An informant described this decline: 'people from Gu [a neighbouring village] used to go to *Oe Kapolangku* often, bringing sick people. Maybe some elders still go there, I don't know.' His final comment suggests that most people have ceased availing themselves of *sangia* sites, but that some elders may still believe in and be willing to use such power. It also associates elders with traditionalist beliefs as opposed to modernist Islam; it is true that most elders are traditionalists, but not all traditionalists are old.

Another Boneoge cave spring, called *Oe La Kaedu*, is located 500 metres outside the village, and has a large pool which is a popular place for swimming. *Oe La Kaedu* does not have healing properties, but it is guarded by 'one who waits' (i.e. a guardian spirit who 'owns' (*punya*), 'guards' (*jaga*) or 'controls' (*pegang*) that location), and can cause sickness in those who are not respectful. When visiting *Oe La Kaedu*, one should toss a rock or two into the pool before

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[314] When near sacred sites one must also refrain from urinating or defecating, since that would be akin to insulting the 'house' of the spirits.

[315] To enter the cave one has to climb down a rock face reminiscent of the stairs people use to enter their houses (BM: *polangku*), hence the name. The cave is about ten meters deep, with small pools of water amongst the rocks.

entering in order to 'ask permission', and the spirits will move out of the way. If this is not done, a spirit could bump into a person swimming, which would cause the person to become ill. Sometimes, it is claimed, on a Friday or on Thursday night (which is considered dangerous throughout Indonesia), people hear the beating of a drum from inside the cave. Almost all Boneoge people refuse to visit *Oe La Kaedu* alone, and when they go in a group, throw a rock in before swimming. Some people now deny belief in such spirits, but when visiting *Oe La Kaedu* they still might throw a rock in 'just to be safe'. But not all do. An elder told me that 'many don't believe now, and don't throw a rock in before swimming...they get sick.' In the context of declining beliefs in these spirits, this assertion that those who do not believe will be punished for their disrespect can be seen as a protest against this decline.

Oe Kuni (BM: Yellow Spring) is another Boneoge *sangia* site. Here, elders explained, the 'one who waits' is 'an old man, blind, with a walking stick...he likes to walk on one leg, with the other one kept bent.' As with other *sangia* sites, one must be careful: 'at *Oe Kuni*, if you speak loudly, or are too bold, or shout, you can fall ill, then you need someone to blow on [*tiup-tiup*] you to make you better.' That is, loud or wild behaviour will bring punishment in the form of illness, which will need to be cured by a *bhisa* (healer) using breath or water with certain prayers.

Graves can also be *sangia* sites. The most important graves in Boneoge are found in the ancestral fort up on the hill, called the *Liwu*.[316] There lie two important graves, one for Wakaakaa (the first ruler of Buton, before Islam arrived), and one for Murhum (the sixth king of Buton, who converted to Islam in 1540 and became the first Sultan). A large banyan tree, itself sacred (as is common throughout Indonesia), marks the spot of Murhum's grave. When I mentioned that Murhum also has a grave in the *keraton* Wolio at Baubau, an elder from Kampung Lama (the farming community on the hill) replied that he knows that Murhum has many graves, but he did die here, before leaving to go

[316] This fort, about two kilometres inland, is now overgrown with vegetation, but I managed to visit it a couple of times. Much of the perimeter wall is still intact – about two metres high and one metre wide, formed of piled rocks, and enclosing an area of a couple of hundred metres square. The fort is built at the edge of a gully, and the approach is steep and defensible. This is where Boneoge people were based before moving to the coast around 1910.

somewhere else. Murhum died in many places, he explained.[317] In the past, people used to walk up to the *Liwu* in order to visit these graves, and to leave offerings and make requests of the *sangia*, but I never heard of this happening while I was in Boneoge. In fact most people expressed surprise when I said that I had gone up to the *Liwu*, since they themselves did not know how to get there and would not care to. Most Boneoge people are completely cut off from this part of their history.

Another common type of *sangia* site is trees. One *sangia* tree is called Wakaea (or alternately Wa Bahagua), and lies on the outskirts of the village. This tree (a *ketapang*; a kind of almond tree) is the home of a spirit which has the power to prevent rainfall, as explained by an elder:

> If it is rainy season but the rains have not come, people go there to say batata. If the clouds have gathered, but they disperse again without raining, people assume that it is the 'one who waits' at that tree who prevented the rain. People go and say batata.

I never heard of anyone going to the tree to ask for rain when I was in the village, but it may have happened surreptitiously, in order to avoid criticism from the modernist Muslims who dominate village religious affairs. One (modernist) informant told me that 'maybe there are still people who go to this cave, but they do it in secret, because it is forbidden by Islam.' There is an assumption amongst most modernists that some people might continue to use such sites, and it is probably people from Kampung Baru, who are assumed to be mostly traditionalists. This association contributes to the low status of Kampung Baru people.

The landscape of Boneoge has thus changed. It used to be marked by sites of spiritual potency, but the power of the land has been eroded. *Miendo wite* were located at particular caves and trees, but also had a presence all over the village. Spirits wander, which is why one had to protect oneself, one's house, and one's garden against them. Nowadays, these spirits receive less fear, and less respect, than they used to. The next section further explores these important concepts of 'fear' and 'respect'.

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[317] It is not surprising that past leaders with great potency have many graves, since their potency was spread all over their territory. Graves provide sites to access this potency (Chambert-Loir and Reid 2002; Pelras 2002).

8.3 Fear and Respect

It initially struck me as odd in Boneoge that people would frequently say 'I fear him' or 'they fear me' when the context seemed to indicate respect, rather than fear. In fact, being safe around elders or *sangia* sites requires both respect and fear, and these concepts blend into each other in Boneoge. This section will explain the nature of the power of *sangia* sites and elders through an examination of respect, fear and the punishments which can result from a failure to fear and respect them.

I occasionally went alone to the water spring (and *sangia* site) *Oe La Kaedu* to swim. People would often ask me 'aren't you afraid?' Thinking that their question reflected either a general aversion to being alone or a worry that I would forget to throw in the required stone before swimming, I would respond 'no, I'm fine, I will make sure to throw in a stone.' I realised later that being 'afraid' is not a weakness, but rather the correct behaviour at such sites; not being afraid is both impolite and unwise. Being unafraid suggests that one does not respect the power of the spirits there, and this can lead to illness. This was spelled out for me once by an informant:

> Once a child was climbing a tree outside Oe Kuni [the Yellow Spring] hunting birds. Suddenly he hugged the tree, feeling nauseous. This means that he had received a reprimand. If we are too bold, that's what will happen. One must be afraid.

This 'fear' indicates a proper respect for the power of the *sangia* places. Similarly, low status people should 'fear' high status people, by having the proper respectful attitude towards them.[318] To indicate such 'fear', people use the Indonesian '*takut*' or the Muna '*te'i*' (BM). The Muna dictionary defines *te'i* as 'afraid', but it also gives the example sentence: 'that is how a fearful child is: it always obeys its parents', which hints at this sense of 'respect'. The common meaning of the English 'fear' is better captured by the Muna term *tere* (afraid, be a coward). The Muna dictionary also gives a third term for 'fear', *meri*, meaning 'stand in awe, feel inferior, be shy, hesitant'. This corresponds well with the

[318] Yunus also reported the Butonese notion that 'those with lower positions should fear those above them' (1995: 131).

Indonesian *segan*, which is also related to respect for powerful or high status people, as explained earlier.

However, when dealing with *sangia* sites or elders, rather than necessarily *feeling* awe and inferiority, the important thing is to act as if you do – that is, to show the outward signs of respect. 'Respect' refers not to an inner state of admiration (or awe) for someone, but rather to a set of practices or embodied conventions which indicate acknowledgement of a status differential. 'Fear', similarly, does not (merely) refer to a primal urge to run away or a lack of courage (which are inner states), but rather to the prudent exhibition of the proper body movements and speech patterns which indicate that one accepts the other as a high status person (or place, or spirit).

If someone does not exhibit the appropriate signs of respect/fear when around a *sangia* site, he or she will suffer consequences in the form of some kind of 'natural' punishment. Similar punishments can occur for failing to 'fear' elders, as mentioned in this quote from an elder:

> One time the Sultan [of Wolio] sent his men to take heads around Madongka [a village two kilometres from Boneoge]. The *bhonto bhalano*[319] [in Wolio] said 'they won't be able to take a head there'. He was right. From then on the Sultans were not brave enough to come to Boneoge...they wouldn't be safe. Representatives from the *keraton* should be just, not cruel, otherwise they won't be safe. Their actions will bring their own consequences.[320] It's not that we use black magic to hurt them. Boneoge is still feared now...the *adat* is tough here. When others meet Boneoge people, they say 'we fear them'. We are feared because we have good manners, not because we beat them up. If they wrong us, they will feel the effects. For example, if someone walks in front of an elder without being polite, he will feel the effects.

When the Sultan was 'not brave enough' to come to Boneoge, this reflected not cowardice, but the recognition by the Sultan that Boneoge was a spiritually powerful village that he could not mess around with. Recognising the spiritual potency of Boneoge, the refusal of subsequent Sultans to return to Boneoge was thus not cowardly but prudent.

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[319] The *bonto bhalano* was a position in the Sultanate of Wolio, meaning something like 'the high minister' (Zahari 1977).

[320] Interestingly, this example of 'knowing your place' involved the Sultan, supposedly the most potent and highest status human in Buton. This hints at the autonomy of the villages under the Wolio Sultanate, something documented also by Schoorl (1994: 33). Although Boneoge paid tribute (*upeti*) to the Sultan, such stories suggest the existence of views that subverted this subordinate relationship.

According to the story, disrespecting Boneoge elders will bring suffering upon the perpetrator not through malicious revenge by the people of Boneoge, but just automatically as a force of nature.[321] Recalling Atkinson's observation that 'the threat of spiritual sanctions upholds community norms and values' (1989: 19), it is clear that such beliefs about automatic punishments serve to assert the high status of Boneoge elders.[322] By saying that Boneoge *adat* is 'tough', the storyteller means that the system of respect and good manners is still in effect (and, importantly, enforced by natural punishments), so that people must 'fear' (i.e. respect) Boneoge elders.[323]

The threat of spiritual sanctions also upholds social hierarchy within Boneoge society. Disrespecting elders brings natural punishment. Note that spiritual sanctions do not protect everyone who has high status following the disentanglement of high status characteristics. Elders, who conform to the old model of high status which emphasises age and *adat* knowledge, do receive such protection, but big men, even though they have high status, do not.

Punishment for disrespecting elders can come through a 'natural' event such as sickness or an accident.[324] For instance I was told that 'if you are sitting in a higher position than an elder, you may not move your feet around, or you will get sick.' Since one's parents are particularly important to respect, sinning against one's parents is a common reason why people get sick, or experience other difficulties in life. When inauspicious or unlucky events occur, one explanation which is considered is whether the person involved has sinned against his or her parents. For example, if during a woman's *fosambu* (BM: a ceremony at eight months of the first pregnancy), the urns are dashed against the floor but do not

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[321] I found two terms in Boneoge for the state of having done something 'wrong' and being due natural retribution: *adabula* (BM) and *balaa* (BM). Errington describes how in South Sulawesi punishments occur naturally when one is in the state of '*mabusung*', resulting from 'inappropriate contact with forces too potent for his or her own potency' (1989: 62). In a similar vein, Atkinson described the condition of '*buto*': 'the debilitating condition characterized by a bloated abdomen, jaundice, and chronic weakness brought on by violations in rank' (1989: 303).

[322] Rousseau commented that the threat of supernatural sanction for disrespecting Kayan elders was related to their political domination: 'the gerontocratic slant of Kayan social life is echoed in the belief that elders, like aristocrats, are imbued with supernatural power; lack of respect towards them brings the risk of supernatural sanction' (1998: 327).

[323] In this context, *adat* can be defined as 'rules for safe conduct in the cosmos' (Errington 1989: 76).

[324] The similarity to the concept of *karma* is clear.

break, it might be because the woman has sinned against her parents, for instance by speaking roughly to them.

It is also possible, though, that elders strike back directly at those who disrespect them, either through mystical power such as curses, or through direct physical action. When the topic of being disrespected by younger people came up, most people seemed eager to describe how cruel they would be in response to this disrespect. People were proud of being merciless in such punishments in order that they be appropriately 'feared'. One day I was talking with a couple of neighbours about the children who often played noisily beside and sometimes under my house. I had told them to be quiet but they were still noisy (note that being noisy at a *sangia* site is one of the prime forms of disrespect which can bring misfortune). When one neighbour suggested splashing them with water to make them move away, another then said, 'I would splash them with *hot* water', taking pride in how cruel he would be with them. If you are not able to demand respect in this manner, it seems to suggest, you do not deserve any (see Errington 1989: 167). Elders are at the top of the age hierarchy in Boneoge, and disrespect from anyone should be punished. Elders are often physically weak and thus often inflict punishments not physically but through mystical means such as curses.[325]

Another form of punishment can occur when people fail to heed the advice of elders, as occurred in the example of the Ambon riots related earlier. Failing to listen to the advice of elders is considered disrespectful, and so those who suffered in Ambon after ignoring the elders' warning to leave were in a sense receiving a reprimand for that disrespect.

When asking the powerful for safety, prosperity, or other favours, one must respect them by giving them gifts. Agricultural rituals are built around the premise that one must 'remember' *miendo wite* (territorial spirits) by holding ceremonies and giving them offerings,[326] in order to avoid negative consequences. Similarly, during the years of the Wolio Sultanate (before 1960),

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[325] The ability of elders to curse people has been noted by Schoorl. He describes how Wolio Sultans were sworn into office by powerful elders who watched over them, and subsequently blessed them for good behaviour or cursed them if they ruled poorly. This curse could bring sickness and infertility (Schoorl 1994: 25). Atkinson (1989: 274), in her study of the Wana of Central Sulawesi, pointed out that powerful people are often assumed to know sorcery, meaning that they could use sorcery to retaliate for any disrespect they suffered.

[326] Schrauwers also reports the term 'remembering' being used to mean 'gift-giving' (2000: 117).

upeti (tributes) were sent from the *kadié* (semi-autonomous villages) to the Sultan at Wolio (the 'owner of the realm') in order to 'ensure good harvests' (Schoorl 2003: 34) – in a similar way that offerings ensure the cooperation of the *miendo wite*. Elders also need to be 'remembered' in order to be properly respected. As one elder explained, 'in the past, if a young man wanted to ask the elders for permission to hold a party, he would have to "pay attention to" the elders, for example giving betel nut to the women, cigarettes to the men.' (Note that this quote suggests that elders were the village leaders in the past, as indeed used to be the case). Earlier that day, a group of young men had come to ask his permission to hold a dance party outside his house; he was upset that they had not brought him several packs of cigarettes as a sign of respect.[327] In all three cases, one must 'remember' the powerful with gifts in order to ensure their cooperation.

To summarise, then, both sacred sites and elders (but not big men) can be referred to as *sangia*.[328] Both are potent entities which deserve to be respected/feared, for similar reasons: in order to honour their status and to avoid both natural and deliberate punishments. Furthermore, the way one respects/fears an elder is similar to the way one respects/fears at a *sangia* site: being restrained in both speech and movement, controlling one's emotions, and providing offerings of food and cigarettes. Offerings for the spirits at *sangia* sites play a similar role to the *upeti* (tributes) which used to be given to the Sultan (the human of highest status) and, on a smaller scale, the packs of cigarettes which Boneoge leaders could expect in the past if people wanted something of them. Given these similarities, the guardian spirits, or *miendo wite*, can be thought of as higher ranking, localised, and non-corporeal elders.[329] Beliefs about *sangia* sites

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[327] This elder himself noted the fact that giving gifts to a decision maker could be seen as corruption; he made sure to say that this was not corruption, but 'following *adat*'.

[328] Errington states that 'the ruler was the protecting, presiding, and central spirit of the realm' (1989: 92). Since the ruler is human, this seems to connect humans of high status with *miendo wite* (spirits of the realm). Speaking of Austronesian words with the root *pu/fu*, she writes: 'such words are associated with ancestors, with high rank, with invisible potency, with owning and protecting.' This connects high status humans with ancestors as well as with *miendo wite* (who own and protect).

[329] Many ethnographies of the region have remarked that elders are similar to spirits, in their need for respect and the threat of supernatural sanctions if they do not receive it. Aragon has noted that the word *pue'* can mean both 'grandparent' and a title for spirits among the Tobaku of Central Sulawesi (2000: 169), while Atkinson notes that the word *pue* can mean both 'lord' and 'high

might have served in the past to help children learn to interact with, and deal appropriately with, power external to themselves, whether it is in the form of a spirit guarding a cave or a respected elder.

So far there has been a missing element in this discussion about the power of elders and of territorial spirits, which further elucidates connections between them: ancestor spirits.

8.4 Ancestor Spirits

Just as Boneoge people are expected to respect their parents and other elders, so they are also expected to respect their dead ancestors.[330] One can respect one's ancestors by praying for them, by keeping their graves tidy, and most importantly, by means of a *posumanga* (BM) ceremony. Like elders and *miendo wite*, ancestor spirits desire to be respected, and failure to do so can result in a reprimand. As with beliefs about *sangia* sites, there have been shifts in beliefs and practices regarding ancestors, although reverence for ancestors persists much more strongly than for *sangia* sites.

Ancestor spirits are called '*sumanga*' in Boneoge.[331] The word *sumanga* may be a cognate of *sumange'*, the Bugis term meaning 'life energy, potency, or 'soul'' (Errington 1989: 309). While Errington (ibid.) described *sumange'* as a diffuse energy which is concentrated to different degrees in people of different status, in Buton *sumanga* was not discussed in this way. Rather, a *sumanga* in Boneoge refers to the spirit of a particular deceased person, just as Acciaioli found for the Bugis (1989: 277). To 'utter *sumanga*' (BM: *dhoa'ao sumanga, basa'ao sumanga*) means to say *batata* prayers for the *sumanga*, in particular the spirits of one's ancestors. These prayers are usually held in the context of a *posumanga* ceremony, which serves to 'pay attention to' or 'remember' one's

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god' among the Wana (1989: 318). Even more specifically: 'many people, places, and objects are imbued with supernatural force, and contact with the supernatural is similar to contact with powerful people. There is a continuum rather than a break between two realities' (Rousseau 1998: 37).

[330] Maintaining good relations with the ancestors is a priority throughout Buton. Schoorl has written about *sumanga* on the island of Buton: 'the primary task of [a particular ritual leader] was to maintain relations with the ancestors, *la ompu*, and to take care of them' (2003: 150; my translation from Indonesian).

[331] The Muna English dictionary defines *sumanga* as 'spirit of dead person, ancestor spirit' (van den Berg 1996: 521).

ancestors, especially those who were of high status or had served the community.[332] Schoorl has described the importance of remembering one's ancestors in Buton:

> In their belief system, the spirits of their ancestors still play an important role. At every important event, the ancestors have to be remembered. Butonese people feel obligated to not forget their ancestors, and always remember them every time they pray to the Almighty God...If [the ancestors] are not properly remembered, this can lead to illness. On the other hand they can also help to bring good fortune. Sometimes they are assumed to act as intermediaries between their descendants and Almighty God (Schoorl 2003: 252; my translation from Indonesian).

'Remembering' is not accomplished simply by thinking about the ancestors; concrete actions are required, in the form of ceremonies and offerings (similar to 'feeding' the *miendo wite*). The *posumanga* ceremony should be held by households regularly, and especially during the holy month of Ramadhan. During the Lebaran celebration at the end of Ramadhan, Boneoge people also make sure to clean up the graves of their deceased parents and other ancestors, as a way of remembering them. Before new undertakings such as long trips, business ventures, or weddings, it is particularly important to remember the ancestors, in effect securing their 'permission' or 'blessing' for the undertaking. Sometimes before such undertakings it is enough to visit one's ancestors' graves in order to remember them, but for the more important occasions a *posumanga* ceremony is necessary.

Before a wedding, for example, it is important that each family hold a *posumanga* ceremony. This is a 'preventative' *posumanga*, designed to placate the *sumanga* so that they do not become angry and reprimand their living descendants. When a wedding is held, invitations must be extended to high status members of society, in order that they not be offended. The same risk of offense holds for the *sumanga*; if they are not 'remembered', they might become 'disappointed' and bring misfortune upon the wedding celebration, perhaps by

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[332] A *posumanga* ceremony is different from an Islamic prayer session which is held to commemorate a specific number of days (3, 7, 40, 100) after the death of a relative. It is also different from propitiations of the *miendo wite*, since the *sumanga* are spirits of our own ancestors – i.e. people who lived and had names – while the *miendo wite* are anonymous and unrelated to humans.

causing the participants to fall ill.[333] *Posumanga* are thus held 'so that no problems arise'.[334]

When ancestors are neglected and become angry, their descendants suffer consequences in the form of illness and misfortune. When this happens, a *posumanga* must be held in order to placate the ancestors so that they stop harming their descendants. It is not always easy to tell when illness is caused by angry *sumanga*, but it is one of the possible diagnoses for a number of conditions, as an informant explained:

> If a child is often sick, one has to hold a *posumanga*. It might be because an ancestor is reprimanding them, so that he or she is remembered. If a child has a fever at *maghrib*, that is the *sumanga*...or if a child has cold feet but has a fever. We have to hold a prayer, and then the child will recover immediately. If an elder has a toothache after *ashar* (the noon prayer), that is the *sumanga* also. The elder might say 'maybe I will hold a *posumanga* for my toothache'.[335]

When misfortune occurs, angry *sumanga* are one possible cause, but those involved will usually engage in discussion and debate in order to determine the most likely cause. I witnessed an interesting example of this kind of analysis, after La Ito, one of my key informants, experienced a motorcycle accident. That morning he had borrowed my motorcycle to go to the nearby town of Baubau. On the way back, as he was riding with a friend on the back of the bike, they crashed with no other vehicles involved. That evening, while La Ito was in the hospital in Baubau, I visited his house, and found his family members discussing possible reasons for the 'accident'.[336]

La Ito's mother-in-law suggested that the place where they crashed was *keramat* (spiritually potent); sometimes people see the ghost of a small child crossing the road there. It was also mentioned that the accident had occurred at

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[333] Chambert-Loir and Reid, in a discussion of beliefs about ancestors in Indonesian societies, point out that 'ancestors do not punish offences against any overarching ethical code; they seek retribution for any lack of proper attention to themselves' (2002: xxi).

[334] Similarly, the Executive tends to ask permission from the most powerful people in the village (such as Haji Ara) before implementing decisions. Failing to acknowledge or include those with power can turn them against one's endeavours.

[335] That the term 'elder' is used here suggests not just that old people get toothaches more often than young people, but also that younger people might not be so quick to diagnose the toothache as stemming from neglect of ancestors, showing a decline in this kind of belief.

[336] The word used for 'accident' was *musibah*. The English 'accident' suggests that the incident was random and without meaning; *musibah*, on the other hand, can be caused by the victim's transgressions.

maghrib, the period around dusk when misfortune is rife. La Ito's sister in law looked at me somewhat accusingly and suggested that the motorcycle itself was ill-fated, since it had been involved in several accidents. La Ito's mother in law said that she was going to call an elder to place *kampana'a* (BM: offerings) at the crash site to appease the malevolent spirit there. The sister in law also recommended that I hold a *haroa* (BW) prayer ceremony for my motorcycle, to purify it of its bad fate.[337] La Ito himself, after returning from the hospital the next day, had a different interpretation of his accident:

> After getting off the ferry [from Baubau], I was riding with my friend on the back when I saw my [deceased] grandparents by the side of the road, so I stopped. They wanted a ride. My friend didn't want them to get on, saying 'where will I ride?' They told him to get off, but he didn't want to. So we drove on. My grandparents were angry...they told me they would cut the bike chain and pop the tire. We hadn't gone far when that is exactly what happened...and the motorbike crashed.

He later added that he had also seen his deceased parents before crashing. His ancestors were angry with him because he would not give them a ride. To La Ito, this was a sign that he had failed to sufficiently 'remember' his ancestors. His ancestors reprimanded him by deliberately caused him to fall. He did not discuss whether he thought his ancestors were right or wrong to do this, but concluded that he needed to hold a *posumanga* ceremony. They have shown themselves, he said, because they are asking for attention.

A few days later, La Ito held a *posumanga* in Gu, his natal village, with about 17 people in attendance. A *posumanga* ceremony involves a *haroa* combined with a *tahlilan* reading, where an elder leads the guests in repeating over and over the phrase '*laa ilaaha illallaah*' (there is no God but Allah).[338] The prayer leader often mentions specific (close) ancestors by name, and also extends the prayer to 'all the others'. La Ito described his *posumanga* to me:

> The Imam says the names of those who are to be sent prayers...to give an 'address' to the prayers. I saw six people: two siblings, two parents, and both

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[337] A *haroa* is a ceremonial meal and prayer, with offerings for spirits which are then eaten by those attending.

[338] The repetitions are counted using a ring of beads (*tasbi*); the *tasbi* has 33 beads, and the participants generally go through the set of beads three times. As with most prayer meetings, only the married men sit and pray, while the women congregate in the kitchen preparing the food and drink, which the men eat after they finish praying.

> of my father's parents. They made me fall, because they have been neglected. So we said those six names, as well as their own ancestors, whose names we didn't pronounce individually. The Imam says something like this: 'let us think of [*niatkan*] all our ancestors who have gone before us, as with those who live, that they be granted mercy from God.'

La Ito also made some '*tahlilan* water', by placing a glass of water near the person who led the *tahlilan* prayers. After the prayers, La Ito drank from the water, and brought some home to Boneoge for his wife and child to drink. He also brought home some water which had been 'blessed' by an elder, in order to ritually bathe the motorcycle.[339]

There is uneasiness about the propitiation aspect of the ceremony. La Ito's last sentence, appealing for mercy from God for the ancestors, appears to be in recognition of the dominant Islamic values in Boneoge, which prohibit requests being made of the *sumanga* or other spirits as this is seen as *syirik* (idolatry). An elder with a reputation for modernist Islam described the change in the 'proper' form of appeals for assistance: 'We used to appeal to people who have served [i.e. high status ancestors]...now we appeal to God.' That is, it used to be acceptable to appeal to important ancestors but now it is not.[340] In order that the ceremony fit current Islamic values, some people de-emphasise the propitiation aspect of the ceremony and describe it, as one informant put it, as 'a prayer for safety, both worldly and in the afterlife, for relatives, including those who have died.' God is now often added into entreaties to the ancestors (and, similarly, to entreaties to *miendo wite*) to increase legitimacy with the modernists. For now the timing of *posumanga*, before important celebrations or after illness or misfortune strikes, suggests that ancestors are still being placated. Nevertheless, the frequency and openness of these ceremonies has been reduced, and the entreaties in them are being slowly reoriented towards God rather than the ancestors.

As may be clear from the discussion so far, the power of the ancestors is in fact the power of elders, carried through into death. Deceased elders must still be

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[339] Bathing is a vital part of healing. A *bhisa* (healer) will 'bless' water by blowing on it and uttering spells. It is then either drunk by a sick patient or used to bathe them. In this case it was the motorcycle which needed cleansing.

[340] Note that the quote described important ancestors as 'those who had served [*berjasa*]', reaffirming the importance of service to the community in notions of status (see Chapter 4).

respected, or they will 'reprimand' those who have 'forgotten' them, just as punishments occur when living elders are disrespected. Although the reprimands might seem malicious and cruel, they are punishments for the 'crime' of failing to exhibit respect towards those who deserve it, and can thus easily be avoided by paying respect where it is due.[341]

In discussing punishments for transgressions against spirits or potent people, the question of intentionality arises. Rousseau, writing about the Kayan of Kalimantan, notes that punishments are unleashed 'automatically' when powerful elders are not respected (1998: 62). Errington has indicated that in Bugis society punishments for transgressions comes through a 'stinging energy' which does not depend on the intention of the people in question:

> When it becomes known that a particular place is ***makerre'*** (Ind.***keramat***; also ***sakti***) or charged with potency, people go out of their way to avoid it. People who are highly potent, most obviously the ruler and very high nobles, are similarly dangerous. Like the danger that inheres in makerre' spots in the terrain, the potent stinging energy of rulers and high nobles exists quite apart from their intention. They, too, are said to be makerre', and must be treated with delicacy, deference, and care (1989: 61).

In Boneoge, both *miendo wite* (territorial spirits) and *sumanga* (ancestor spirits) intentionally punish offenses against themselves. La Ito described how his ancestors threatened him when he refused to give them a ride on his motorbike, and then intentionally punished him. Punishments for infractions against *miendo wite* are also seen as intentional, often being described as a 'reprimand' because the *miendo wite* are 'angry'. Punishment for disrespect of living elders (including parents) sometimes occurs 'automatically' without their intention, but elders can also punish intentionally.

Sumanga not only punish offenses against themselves; they also punish humans who fail to respect their living parents. If someone speaks impolitely to their parents and then suffers misfortune, it might be that the *sumanga* are punishing them. An informant gave the following example. If at a wedding ceremony the rice will not cook properly, then one knows that the *sumanga* are angry; it is likely that the bride or groom is *nobalaa nae kamokulano* (BM:

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[341] Pelras has pointed out that Bugis worship ancestors out of duty (i.e. fear of punishments), to ask for protection and to ask for favours (Pelras 2002: 129); the same purposes as in Boneoge.

experiencing a misfortune due to having offended one's parents). In this case the punished person must ask forgiveness from his or her parents, as the offended party, rather than from the *sumanga*. On the other hand if someone is punished for neglecting his ancestors, the *sumanga*, then he must seek forgiveness from them, through a *posumanga* ceremony.

In this way *sumanga* act to ensure that the young respect their elders, just as they themselves demand to be respected as they are 'older' than living people. *Sumanga* retaliate for offenses against living elders, just as *miendo wite* retaliate for offenses against *sangia* sites. Both *miendo wite* and *sumanga* thus act as enforcers of social protocol, as a 'disembodied' power which retaliates against humans for infractions. Each can also retaliate for infractions against themselves; for example, if they are not 'feared', 'fed', or 'remembered' properly. Thus although a punishment for an infraction against a *sangia* site or an elder might be described as 'happening by itself', in fact punishments occur through the agency of spirits. That is, the spirits are 'personifications' of the 'natural' power of the universe which punishes infractions against sacred sites and sacred people; *miendo wite* are the potency of the domain, and *sumanga* are the potency of one's (living and dead) ancestors. *Sumanga* act as enforcers of respect for elders, and in doing so act to preserve the high status position of elders within the Boneoge social hierarchy. With the erosion of beliefs about *sumanga*, then, the position of elders is also weakened.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown parallels between the status of living elders, ancestors, and *sangia* spirits; the principles of how to safely interact with them are similar, the same ideology of fear and respect apply to all, and offences against all can be punished 'naturally' (i.e. without human intervention). That is, the high status of elders is naturalised in the local cosmology. This has served in the past to preserve their status and thereby indirectly to assert the value of qualities which they possess, such as age and *ilmu*.

Over the past half century, however, these cosmological underpinnings of the status of elders have been eroded. The abolishment of the Wolio Sultanate in 1960 undermined the whole ideology of traditional leadership and its

connections to the spirits of the realm. The cessation of agricultural rituals and the rise of modernist Islam in Boneoge have undermined beliefs about spirits, the potency of the land and ancestors, which underpinned notions of respect for elders.

Over the same period, the political and economic power of elders has declined. This is related to the process of disentanglement whereby characteristics important for status are increasingly possessed by different people; elders no longer control access to wealth in the village. Political changes include the rise of democratic ideals which have loosened the political control which elders once possessed. Although elders still command respect in Boneoge, their status has diminished.

In relating the power of spirits to the power of elders, I have portrayed a connection between ritual and social processes, as did Atkinson in her study of Wana shamanship and community leadership. She maintained that 'ritual symbolism and social relations do not parallel each other but operate as part of the same process' (1989: xii). Rather than asserting that either spirits or elders are a model for the other, it is more appropriate to see conceptions of both as stemming from an underlying reality. That is, rather than arguing that a decline in the status of one causes a decline in the status of the other, I am arguing that the two are connected. The decline in the status of elders and beliefs about spirits reinforce each other, since each speaks to underlying truths about the nature of power and status. This is a simultaneous rejigging of social and spiritual hierarchies in Boneoge. Processes of economic, political, and religious change have coincided to weaken the position of elders, and to prioritise the big man model, in the status system.

CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

This thesis has described shifts in the system of social status in Boneoge during a period of rapid social change. During the past 60 years, social life in the village of Boneoge has been rapidly transformed through interconnected changes in the political, economic and religious realms. Political change has included the birth of the Indonesian state, the abolition of the Butonese Sultanate, and changing structures of village authority associated with post-Suharto democratisation. Economic change has included the rise of trading livelihoods, increasing wealth disparities in the village, and the rapid decline of agriculture. Religious change has included a strengthening of modernist Islam and the decline of *adat* rituals related to farming and territorial spirits. These are local manifestations of broader processes of state formation and the increasing reach of capitalism and global religion which are now transforming social life in many parts of the world.

Social status in Boneoge depends on a number of characteristics, including not only hereditary rank, but also wealth, religious reputation, knowledge of *adat*, age, the holding of leadership positions, the possession of patronage networks and the degree of autonomy one has. The past 60 years has seen clear shifts in the characteristics which are seen as most deserving of high status. The new emphasis in the status system is on wealth rather than descent, on patronage rather than formal leadership positions or age, and on modernist Islam rather than traditional *adat* knowledge.

In the new model of high status, which Boneoge people call *sukses*, high status depends on integration into the community. Religious reputation, patronage and kinship remain important; this is not an individualistic and secular capitalist model of the successful man. However, the qualities necessary for a good religious reputation, the form of patronage links and the ways in which kinship is used have changed. A good religious reputation depends not on knowledge of *adat* but on carrying out the proper observances of a modernist Muslim. Patronage networks no longer centre on semi-hereditary village leaders or those of high rank, but instead centre on successful traders who are able to

provide their clients – usually kin – with employment opportunities. Kinship-based networks grow up around successful people, raising their status, and providing the main route through which young people attempt to achieve lucrative livelihoods. Together, these shifts in emphasis mean that the ideal model of high status resembles more the 'big men' (wealthy traders) than it does the 'old men' (wise elders).

This does not mean that wise elders are no longer valued in Boneoge. However, it does mean that their position has weakened relative to the big men, who now have the highest status. The old men do not control access to economic opportunities which young men are interested in obtaining, and their political control of the village has waned. Young people aspire to become like the big men, building trading businesses involving networks of patronage with Boneoge people. Rank has become almost meaningless in Boneoge life.

Status is tightly connected with religious change. High status people are able to spread their version of proper religious behaviour, and displaying the currently dominant version of proper religious behaviour contributes to one's status. High status villagers now subscribe to modernist Islam; traditionalists are viewed as poor Muslims, and their status is lower accordingly. The rise of modernist Islam in Boneoge has led to the decline of a number of *adat*-based rituals. In particular, beliefs and practices surrounding territorial spirits have been targeted as inappropriate, and this is related to a decline in status of farmers, farming as a livelihood, elders, *adat* knowledge relating to those spirits, the rank system, and leadership positions within the Wolio Sultanate.

Dismissing the legitimacy of the beliefs of the farmers has become part of a project of identity formation amongst the modernist Muslims in the village. By denoting particular beliefs as animist or Hindu leftovers, modernists stake a claim to being better followers of Islam, and, at the same time, to being more modern members of a new global order consisting of nations following global religions rather than tribes following parochial beliefs. For the emerging group of successful traders in Boneoge, most of whom are modernist, their success is a further demonstration of their superiority to the 'backward' farmers.

Social divisions between the modernists of Boneoge proper and the traditionalists of Kampung Baru appear to mirror in many ways the distinction

between coastal traders and hilltop agriculturalists in Indonesia. However, in the Boneoge case, the differences emerged during a sixty year period when one group descended to the coast in advance of the other; both were part of the same group at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is a reminder that even when differences between such groups might appear to be cultural, the role of political and economic factors in creating such differences deserves much more attention, a point also made by Tania Murray Li (2001).

Migration has emerged as a crucial factor in these changes in the status system. Throughout this period, migration has been an essential part of life for Boneoge people; almost all men 'seek in foreign lands', often for long periods. The migrations undergone by Boneoge people have changed dramatically over the past few decades, as migrants have flexibly adapted to opportunities and constraints in their region. Boneoge people are outward focused in that status is to be gained not through control of the land or by descent, but through *sukses* which is found outside the village. At the same time Boneoge migrants have remained anchored to the Boneoge community, because much of the migration has been circular and also because even long term migrants tend to be tightly connected to Boneoge social networks.

This strong anchoring to the home village has meant that migrants have been at the forefront of social change there. Those migrants who achieve the most success become a model for others to emulate, and in the process act as conduits through which regional influences impact upon village life. The flexible nature of status in Boneoge, where high status is not significantly determined by heredity, means that Boneoge social life is particularly responsive to change, as beliefs, values, and practices in Boneoge are re-negotiated in response to regional influences brought home through the experiences of the migrants. In this way the social impacts of urbanisation reach out to the villages through the mobility of circular migrants. At the same time, the big man model of status, which has strengthened over the past 60 years, has acted as a key driving force in motivating and shaping the migration practices of Boneoge people. This goes some way towards explaining the dynamism and success of Butonese migrants throughout eastern Indonesia.

The role of migration in Boneoge contrasts with what Lineton found for Bugis society. She argues that long-term migration removes the ambitious and able young people so that the nobility can maintain their political power in the homeland (1975a: 208). This is not the case in Boneoge, where the nobility have not been able to use control over agricultural land to maintain status, as agricultural land is not in demand. In Boneoge, migration does not bleed off dissent, but rather enables migrants to become wealthy traders and return to the home village as the highest status members of the community, far surpassing nobles. The wealthy traders come home with the ideological baggage of their journey, including modernist Islam, and their ideas tend to spread within Boneoge society. In this sense they can be seen to have achieved a political, economic, and spiritual domination of the home village akin to what Acciaioli found for Bugis migrants amongst locals in Lindu, Central Sulawesi (1989).

The changes in the status system described in this thesis also call attention to the social tensions and ruptures caused by forced resettlement. In 1970, the farmers living in the hills above Boneoge were forced to move down to the coast, bringing together two groups with different livelihoods and belief systems, which led to friction. In this case the people of Kampung Baru fared poorly, with their belief systems and farming livelihood becoming markers of low status. Similar resettlements of hill people to the coast happened all over Indonesia at this time, and the longer term social and cultural effects of these resettlements have not been adequately understood.

In 1999 over a thousand Boneoge people returned to Boneoge from Ambon in another forced resettlement, this time due to the riots in Ambon. The return of these urbanised migrants led to upheavals in Boneoge social life, as documented in this thesis. This movement was also part of a large scale phenomenon, as the violence which occurred in many parts of Indonesia during the democratic transition of 1998-2002 led many migrants to return to their ethnic homelands. As Fox puts it, 'local resentment towards these migrants – toward the Bugis and Butonese in eastern Indonesia and towards the Madurese in Kalimantan – ...forced an unprecedented reverse migration' (Fox 2002: 301). People born in Kalimantan to Madurese parents are considered Madurese, just as those born in Ambon to Butonese parents are considered Butonese. When ethnic conflict

breaks out, such people are considered 'migrants', even if they have never migrated anywhere during their own lifetimes, and they often end up fleeing for their own safety, to their ethnic homelands. It is sometimes assumed that their resettlement there will be relatively easy, as long as their basic physical needs are met. In fact, however, social and cultural differences exist between them and non-migrants in their homelands, and can lead to tensions, even though all carry the same ethnic label. By describing some of the ways in which different values and experiences between two such groups can clash and impact upon social life in the home village, this thesis draws attention to the social and cultural implications of forced resettlement.

Over the past century, Boneoge has undergone a transition from territorial livelihoods to maritime-based ones. This has involved a weakening of the connection between Boneoge people and the land, seen in the move away from agriculture as well as in the disenchantment of the land described in Chapters 7 and 8. However, deagrarianisation, migration, and urbanisation have not severed the connection of Boneoge people to their village. As demonstrated by the kin-based migration networks and other dynamics described in this thesis, Boneoge people remain tightly connected to the Boneoge community, but this connection has undergone a shift from a geographic one, centred on the land of the home village, to a more demographic one, centred on groups of kin.

Those people who turned to sailing and trading early have achieved more wealth, status and power in the village than those who remained farming for longer. The changes in the status system have reflected this transition from territorial to maritime livelihoods, increasingly prioritising the outward-focused sailor/trader livelihood over that of the sedentary farmer. However, I do not claim that this transition will be permanent. In Chapter 2 I described how the history of Buton has been characterised by a complementarity between maritime and territorial livelihoods, with one usually more dominant than the other. Depending on regional conditions, Butonese society has seemed to oscillate between a maritime or a territorial focus. Seen within that context, the twentieth-century shift towards maritime livelihoods is not necessarily final and permanent. Rather, it is an adaptation to regional conditions, and how Butonese livelihoods –

and the status system – will change in the future depends on how those conditions change.

It is worth commenting briefly on the process through which changes in the status system have occurred. The particularly intense renegotiation of what is important for status in Boneoge was enabled by a disentanglement of elites, similar to what was described by Gibson (2005: 225) for South Sulawesi, as discussed in Chapter 1. In the past, a combination of characteristics such as noble descent, village office, age seniority, wealth, *adat* knowledge, and strong patronage networks used to be possessed by elite members of society, but now those qualities are increasingly held by different people. This disentanglement means that elites possessing different sorts of characteristics are competing with each other for high status. Community members together determine which people are most deserving of respect, and at the same time, the characteristics themselves are implicitly evaluated as to their importance in Boneoge life.

The changing dynamics of status reflect how Boneoge people respond to larger changes occurring in their region and in the world. That is, decisions about which characteristics deserve high status are actually implicit valuations of what is important in life, and these valuations change in response to regional influences such as the rise of modernist Islam and the spread of capitalist livelihoods. It should be clear from this thesis that the homogenising forces of globalisation – such as capitalism, global religion, integration into a modern nation-state and increased mobility – have not erased the local character of Boneoge social life; rather, the model of status in Boneoge retains a significant local flavour, albeit with shifts of emphasis, which reflects how Boneoge people have actively appropriated external elements to fit their own agendas.

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